

# **Student Wellness Update**

Bernards High School--HSA  
November 2021

# What's happening?

## Traumatic Incidents--Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):

\*Illness [Covid-19 and others]

\*Economic Instability:

\* Food scarcity














\* Housing uncertainty

\*Family tension

\*Abuse and/or neglect

\*Racism/discrimination

### Adverse Childhood Experiences 3 - 18 year olds with experience of:

Abuse & neglect at home	Living in care or being homeless	Parent & carer problems
 Sexual abuse	 Living in care	 Domestic violence
 Verbal abuse	 Homeless	 Incarceration
 Physical abuse	 Mental illness	 Alcohol abuse
 Neglect	 Drug use	 Parental separation
		 Death

# Feelings

\*STRESS

\*ANXIETY

\*DEPRESSION

\*GRIEF

\*Insecurity

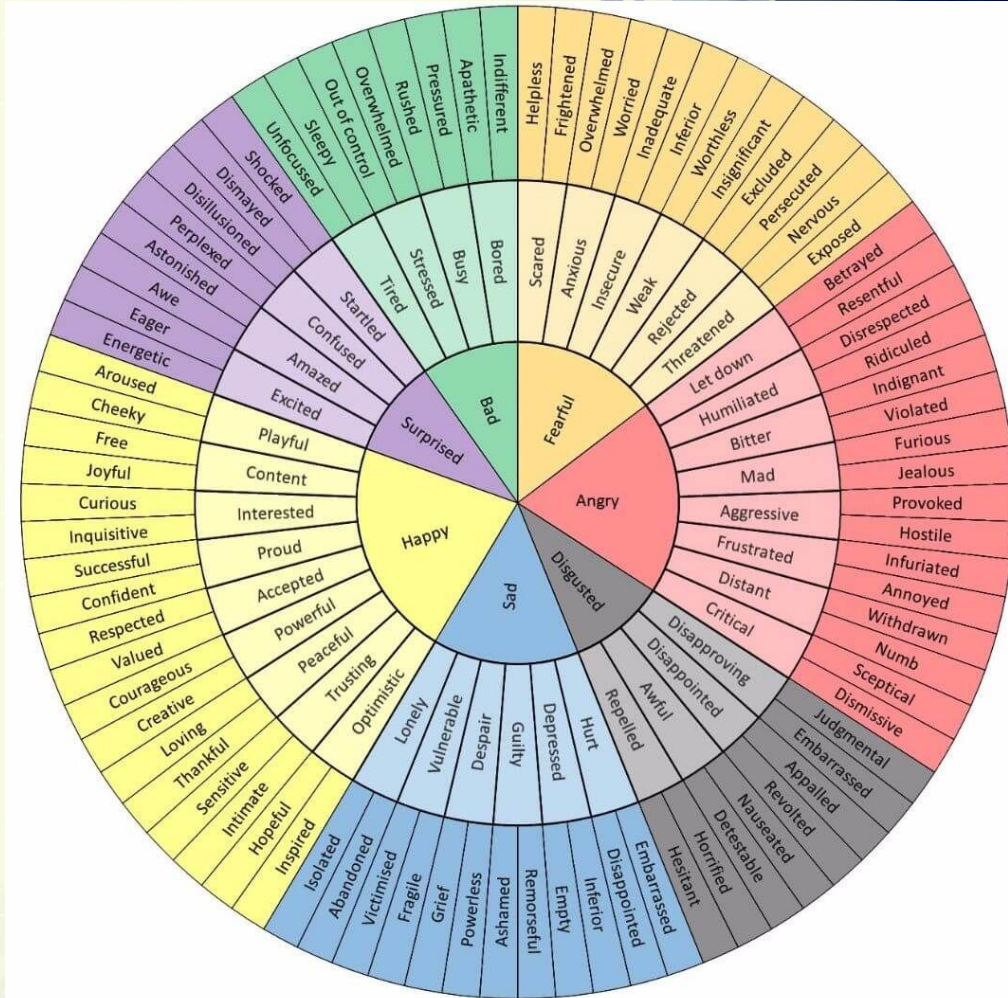
\*Confusion and apprehension

\*Fatigue/Exhaustion

\*Disconnected

\*Disinterested

\*\*MIXED EMOTIONS



# What students may be experiencing:

- \*attendance issues, school refusal
- \*separation anxiety
- \*concern about loved ones
- \*fears about getting sick or dying (self or others)
- \*difficulty reacclimating to school schedules and routines
- \*difficulty remaining focused for the duration of the full-length school day
- \*difficulty concentrating on tasks
- \*withdrawn from participating in classroom activities/lack of social interaction
- \*challenges meeting deadlines/prioritizing work
- \*challenges wearing facial coverings for an extended period of time
- \*chronic worrying
- \*sleepiness in class due to inability to sleep properly at night
- \*lack of energy or initiative



# Changes in Teens

## What to look for:

- Changes in academic performance or difficulty concentrating.
- Sleeping too much or too little; periods of manic activity.
- Noticeable weight loss or changes in eating habits.
- Outbursts, fighting, irritability, out-of-control moods that cause trouble with others.
- Destructive or risky behavior.
- Talking about hurting themselves or others, suicidal thoughts or self-harm.
- Persistent sadness, excessive worry, sudden or new fears.

## *How Do I Encourage My Child to Maintain a Routine at Home?*

- Maintaining some structure at home is important.
- Create a simple, flexible routine.
- Sample:
  - Wake up
  - Brush teeth/shower/ get dressed
  - Have breakfast
  - Navigate the school day
  - Homework completion
  - Extracurricular Activities/Downtime/ Outdoor activity
  - Dinner
  - Reading
  - Bed
- Make this a collaborative task.

## *My Child Seems to be Procrastinating More Than Usual. How Can I Help?*

- Avoidance of uncomfortable emotions vs. time-management?
- Create an environment conducive to learning.
  - Have a designated work space (other than their bed!)
- Help them get started and/or set goals.
  - Chunk tasks.
  - Just 5 minutes.
- Encouraging breaks throughout the day.
  - Boosts productivity.
  - Helps one think more clearly.
  - Allows one to stay focused for longer periods of time.
- Provide praise and/or things to look forward to.

# Supports/Resources in the District

- Classroom lessons, Health class presentations
  - Special topics: Signs of Suicide (SOS training/prevention), Consent 101
- Individual & group counseling sessions
  - School Psychologist (Dr. Miranda) and Student Assistance Counselor (Ms. Drew)
- Counselor outreaches
- Lunchtime wellness activities
- Stress Less Committee--student activities, giveaways, teacher tips, homework free weekends
- Ongoing training for staff regarding trauma-informed instructional practices and interventions, wellness initiatives
  - Trauma Team
- Partnership with Rutgers Behavioral Health for additional support
- Continued partnerships with community organizations: Crisis in Community, Cancer Support Network, Good Grief, Traumatic Loss Coalition, Middle Earth, and more
- District website, resources shared in Friday Folders, Google Classrooms, Twitter (@BHSGuidanceDept), Instagram (@SHSDWellnessCorner)
- Visit the [Chill Zone](#) website (district's virtual wellness room)

# Wellness Activities

\* Incorporate creative strategies for self-care:

- journaling
- art (photography, doodling)
- movement (stretching, yoga)
- mindfulness
- breathing exercises
- vision boards
- gratitude journals



\*\*Check out our district's virtual wellness space: The [Chill Zone](#) for ideas

# Other Tips for Assisting Students

- \* Maintain open communication to develop trust, build relationships, and normalize feelings
- \* Encourage students to communicate any questions or concerns to teachers (even via email)
- \* Create regular routines for healthy habits (eating, sleeping, school work)
  - \*\* Use chunking to break down tasks, set smaller goals
  - \*\* Have a dedicated work space, if possible
- \* Encourage students to stay connected with peers and engage in enjoyable activities
  - \*\* Get involved in BHS extracurricular activities and community activities
- \* Take breaks after small accomplishments
- \* Use positive coping statements to build resiliency--  
(reframe: “I can do this” instead of “I’ll never be able to...”)
- \* Partner with student’s school counselor and/or case manager



# Formal Support Plans

Comparison Chart

Component	I &RS / RTI	Section 504	IDEA/ Special Education NJAC
<b>Purpose</b>	Is a state statute whose purpose is to assist students who are experiencing learning, behavior or health difficulties and to assist staff who have difficulties in addressing student learning, behavior or health needs.  <i>N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7</i>	Is a civil rights law that protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in any agency, school or institution receiving federal funds against discrimination and to provide persons with disabilities to the greatest extent possible, an opportunity to fully participate with their peers.  <i>Federal-34 CFR 104, Subparts A, C and D, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973</i>	Are statues whose purpose is to ensure a free and appropriate education for children with disabilities who fall within one of the specific disability categories as defined by the law.  Federal-34 CFR 300, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  <i>N.J.A.C. 6A:14, Special Education</i>
<b>Student Population</b>	Covers all students experiencing learning, behavior or health difficulties. Serves general education students and permits provision of services to special education students in coordination with student's IEP team.	Covers all persons with a disability. Section 504 defines a person with a disability as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● having a physical or mental impairment which limits one or more major life activity.</li> <li>● have a record of such an impairment; or</li> <li>● are regarded as having an impairment</li> </ul>	Covers eligible students ages 3-21 whose disability adversely affects the child's educational performance and the child requires special education
<b>Team Composition</b>	Multidisciplinary Team-any certified staff members and ad hoc members as appropriate.  Includes a building principal or designee, general education teacher, school support staff and the person requesting assistance	A group of certified persons, including those knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation data and the placement options.  Can be same members as I&RS team	Child Study Team includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School Psychologist</li> <li>● School Social Worker</li> <li>● Learning Disabilities Teacher-Consultant</li> </ul> Can also include: Speech and Language Specialist, Physical/Occupational Therapist Case Manager from Child Study Team
<b>Team Leader / Case Management Role</b>	School Counselor	School Counselor	Case Manager from Child Study Team
<b>Assessment</b>	Functional	Functional and/or Standardized	Functional and Standardized
<b>Written Plan</b>	I&RS Action Plan	504 Accommodation Plan	Individualized Educational Program (IEP)
<b>Review and Follow-Up</b>	6-8 weeks after initial problem-solving meeting/implementation of I&RS Action Plan	A one-year review of the accommodation plan	Annual review of IEP Re-evaluation of IEP every 3 years or sooner, if conditions warrant
<b>Family's Due Process Rights</b>	No	Yes	Yes

# BHS Guidance Calendar of Events

- \* **August/September**--Schedule adjustments
- \* **September/October/November**--College letters of recommendation
- \* **Evening Programs**: Freshmen Parents' Night, Senior College Night, Financial Aid Night, FAFSA Completion Workshop, College Panel Night, Junior College Planning Night
- \* **December**--*Naviance* Career Interest Surveys--Sophomore Classes
- \* **January-early March**: Scheduling for the next school year & Junior conferences
- \* **January**--Grade 8 Curriculum Open House
- \* **March**--*Naviance* Introductions--Freshmen Classes
- \* **April/May**--NJSLA & NJGPA exams
- \* **May**--Advanced Placement Exams
- \* **June**--Senior Surveys; Graduation!
- \* **July/August**--**Limited Work Hours**

# Additional Resources

- Somerset County Community Agencies & [Resources](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)
- National Association of School Psychologists--[Resource Center](#)
  - [Tips](#) for Parents--Navigating the Pandemic
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)--[Resources](#)
- SHSD Website (Guidance and SAC pages, COVID-19 resources)

# Questions?

Please post your questions in the chat and I'll do my best to answer them!



Thank you!

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