

Skills for Staying Mentally Healthy and Parenting Support for Middle Schoolers

Mercer Island Youth and Family Services



IMS and MIYFS Counseling Team

MIYFS Counselors

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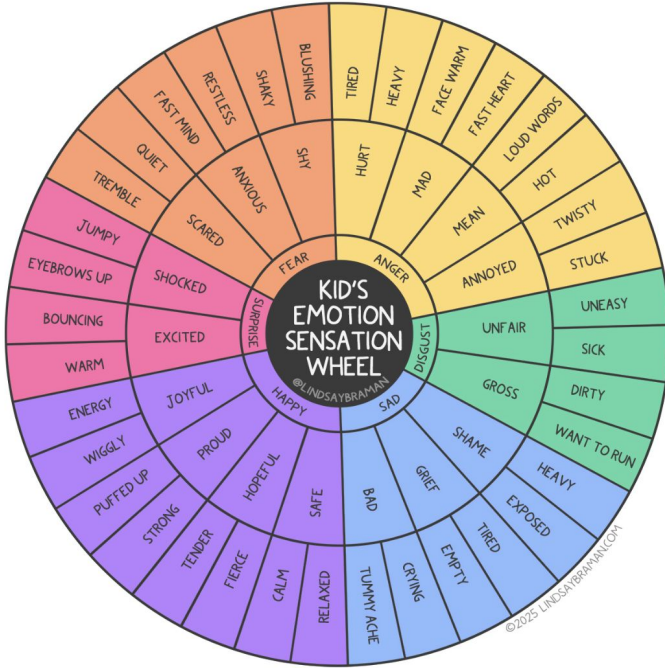
What can a counselor help with?

The IMS School Counselors and MIYFS Counselors work closely as a team, with specific roles and responsibilities to support students and families.

What we do:

- The IMS School Counselors and MIYFS Counselors work closely as a team, but there are some differences in the roles and responsibilities of the school based counselors and the MIYFS counselors.
- All IMS School Counselors provide social emotional support, support with academics, peer conflict, family changes, stress and anxiety management, peer mediation and anything else that may come up for a student or family, counselors are here to help.
- MIYFS Counselors are on site to provide a range services, including individual counseling, facilitating youth leadership development programs, family counseling and consultation and teaching emotional self-care.
- IMS School Counselors in addition to providing mental health counseling in partnership with MIYFS, also schedule parent/teacher conferences, manage student schedules, manage 504 plans, support with academics and student self advocacy.
- IMS School Counselors are here to address any concern or question you or your student has, the IMS School Counselors are your starting point and will refer you and your student to the appropriate resources to address your concerns or needs.

Understanding Feelings



- Identify core emotions (Happy, Sad, Angry, Fear, etc.)
- Connect feelings to physical body sensations.
- Expand emotional vocabulary from basic to complex.
- Develop self-awareness and regulation skills.

Relaxation Skills



Paced Belly Breathing

Breathing deeply into your belly tells your body you are safe. Effective for de-escalating when stressed or anxious.

- Sit comfortably with legs crossed or on knees.
- Place one hand on your belly and one on your chest.
- Inhale slowly through your nose for 4 seconds.
- Exhale through your mouth for 6 seconds.
- Repeat 3-5 times.

When to Practice:

- Bedtime/Morning
- Before tests
- After conflicts
- In nature

Mindfulness



Defining Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention on purpose to the present moment, without judging or trying to change your experience.



**THE KEYS TO
RESILIENCE**

- Cultivating Healthy Attachments and Connections
- Cultivating Positive Emotions
- Cultivating a Sense of Purpose

BEHAVIORAL PRACTICES FOR RESILIENCE

R – Relationships

E – Exercise

F – Fun; Recreation & Enjoyable Activities

R – Relaxation & Stress Management

E – Eat Well – Nutrition & Diet

S – Sufficient Sleep

H – Helping others

E – Earth – Time in Nature

R – Reason – Sense of Purpose (Religiosity & Spirituality)

THE FIVE BASICS OF PARENTING ADOLESCENTS

1. Love and Connect

2. Monitor and Observe

3. Guide and Limit

4. Model and Consult

5. Provide and Advocate

Intentional Parenting

Spending time with your child/teen and being present and available sends a message that your child/teen matters.

Being responsive and involved.

Communicating in a way that creates the warmth and safety needed to have tough conversations.

Intentional Communication

Having consistent and predictable rules.

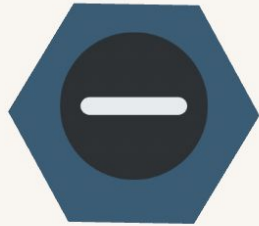
Clearly communicating family expectations and being consistent with enforcing logical consequences.

Balancing authority while supporting autonomy.

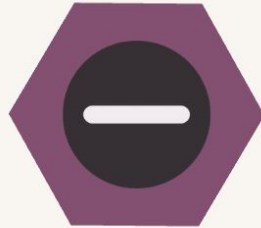
Providing guidelines within which your child/teen can find their own way as they develop skills and solidify values.

Connection Tips & Traps

When you are spending time with your child:



Don't use connection time as "Teaching" time or go into "Fix-It" mode.



Don't let technology steal your attention.
Be fully present.



Show up when they're willing to talk.
For adolescents and teens, this may be at 11:30 at night!

Our Role Changes

Manager

A manager-parent tries to ensure that the child makes the “best” decisions.



Consultant

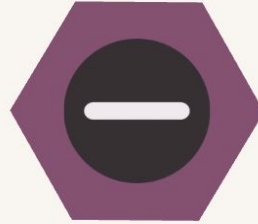
A consultant-parent focuses on helping her teenager develop and exercise “decision-making muscles.”

High school years are an active training period for adulthood.

Get Input from your Adolescent



Both parent and teen
need to be in a calm state



Don't try to get input
in the heat of a
moment.



Focus on connection
before correction

Self Regulation



Source:
Youthline Central South Island,
New Zealand

The STOP Technique

When you find yourself overwhelmed, try this!

S

Stop. Stop whatever you're doing. Take a step back. Disengage from the situation. Take a break and put everything off for just a few minutes.

T

Take a deep breath. And another, and another. Give yourself 15 seconds of just focusing on your breath. Feel the breath moving through your body.

O

Observe. Notice your thoughts and how your body is feeling. Name the emotions you're feeling and consider why you are feeling that way with no judgment.

P

Proceed. Move forward in an intentional way that honors your needs and feelings. What will really make you feel better or help you cope?

BlessingManifesting

the "I-Message"

- conveys the impact of someone's actions without blame
- allows your child/teen to receive the information without raising defenses
- parent can deliver less information in a way that your child/teen can understand

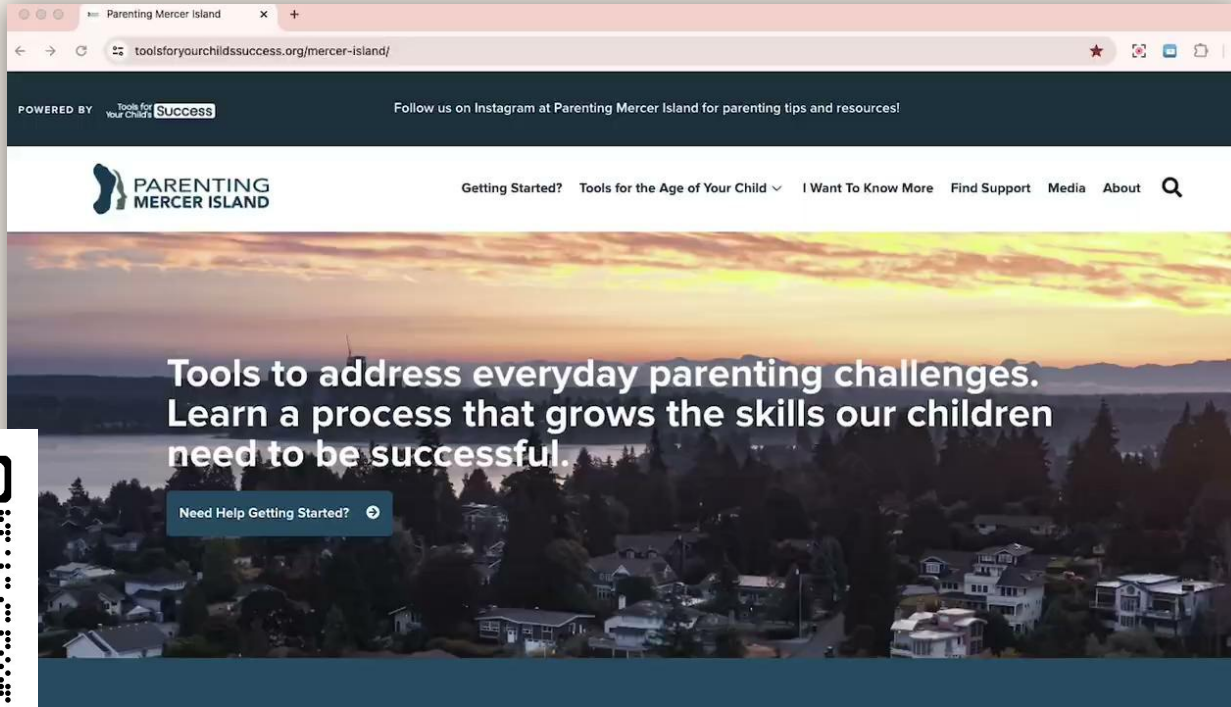
THE 3-PART I-MESSAGE

1. I'm feeling _____
(my feeling)
2. Because _____
(your behavior)
3. The reason I feel this way is _____
(impact)

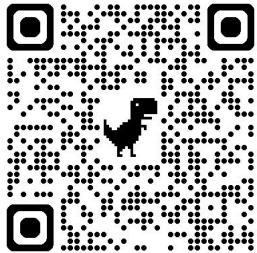
+ AND what are some ways we can address this problem?

Parenting Mercer Island

<https://ParentingMercerIsland.org>



The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the homepage of Parenting Mercer Island. The browser's address bar shows the URL toolsforyourchildsucces.org/mercer-island/. The page features a dark header with the text "POWERED BY Tools for Your Child's SUCCESS" and a social media prompt: "Follow us on Instagram at Parenting Mercer Island for parenting tips and resources!". Below the header is a navigation menu with the logo "PARENTING MERCER ISLAND" and links for "Getting Started?", "Tools for the Age of Your Child", "I Want To Know More", "Find Support", "Media", and "About". The main content area has a background image of a sunset over a town. The text reads: "Tools to address everyday parenting challenges. Learn a process that grows the skills our children need to be successful." A button labeled "Need Help Getting Started?" is positioned below the text.



Get to know this amazing PARENTING RESOURCE!

The website includes **tools** that are **organized developmentally by the age of the child.**

At the core of each of the tools is the **5-step intentional parenting process** that is grounded in **intentional communication and social and emotional skills.**

The screenshot displays the Parenting Mercer Island website. At the top, it says "POWERED BY Tools for Your Child's SUCCESS" and "Follow us on Instagram at Parenting Mercer Island for parenting tips and resources!". The navigation menu includes "Getting Started?", "Tools for the Age of Your Child", "I Want To Know More", "Find Support", "Media", and "About". The main content area features a video player titled "Getting Started?" with the subtitle "Tools For Your Child's Success". The video description reads: "Explore a process for dealing with simple and challenging parenting topics, discover ways to promote a healthy parenting relationship, and learn how to better communicate with your child." Below the video player are three image thumbnails: a young girl smiling, a woman and a man smiling, and a person walking in a forest. A blue accessibility icon is visible in the bottom right corner.