

COUNSELING CONNECTION

ACCHS School Counseling Office Newsletter

December/January 2020-21



GOOD-BYE 2020 — HELLO 2021! If hindsight is 20/20, then what will 2021 be?! :)

We have lots of hindsight about what we hoped to accomplish these past months, but life handed us a different agenda. This year has been one of challenge, stress, and uncertainty, yet one of filled with flexibility, resiliency, and unanticipated opportunities for growth. Sometimes it's your perspective that makes the difference in your experience. Read on for more articles about reclaiming joy, making the most of your current reality, and spilling over with a good attitude, as well as other helpful info. As we prayerfully prepare ourselves for the coming of the Christ Child, let us also fortify ourselves with positive thoughts to welcome a new year filled with God's grace and blessings. **Merry Christmas!** SCO

Reclaiming Your Joy This Holiday Season

From MovethisWorld.com

The holiday season is known as the most wonderful time of the year. Decorations, food, friends and family, celebration, gifts — the holidays can be overwhelmingly good. What's not often discussed are the difficult emotions that many are experiencing.

According to Harvard Medical School, a 2015 survey done by Healthline shows that sixty-two percent of respondents reported elevated stress during the holidays. Many deal with these difficult emotions, and they don't simply fade away come December. So how can we reclaim our joy this holiday season?

Here are 5 ways to cope with holiday stress.



1. **Know your stressors.** Understand your stress and what it does to your body. Stress presents itself in many ways, and feels differently for every individual. Reflect on and identify the areas in your life where your difficult emotions may present themselves. It's important to identify the causes of your stress, so you can begin utilizing stress management techniques that work best for you.
2. **Be kind to yourself.** Understand that it's perfectly normal to experience difficult emotions, even during the holidays. Studies show that our stress levels tend to spike during this time, so it's important to set realistic expectations for ourselves. Acknowledge your emotions, and understand that feelings of excitement, apprehension, grief, sadness, and anxiety are all okay to feel. Give yourself permission and find ways to healthily identify, express, and manage these feelings.
3. **Take care of yourself.** Self care comes in many different forms. Self care can include anything that benefits our mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health. Building a self care routine allows us to handle difficult challenges that present themselves in everyday life.
4. **Find times for mindful awareness of the present moment.** During this hectic time, awareness of the present moment may be the perfect thing to help you appreciate micro-moments because it helps us to be fully present when spending time with those closest to us. The benefits include reduced stress and resilience to challenging situations, as well as, the ability to clear our minds of negative thoughts and develop a positive outlook. So how can we shift our mindsets to better reflect the joy and positivity of the season? Studies show that adopting a positive outlook has great health benefits and can reduce stress. One way to add positivity to your life is through keeping a gratitude journal. Reflecting on what you're grateful for daily is a great practice to incorporate into a self care routine.
5. **Give back.** It's the season of giving, and the perfect time to incorporate generosity into your life. Did you know that generosity makes us feel good and even has health benefits? A great way to reclaim your joy during the holiday season is to do kind things for others. Generosity doesn't have to be tangible, and it doesn't have to cost money. Generosity promotes social connection and encourages others to give as well.

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- ACT/SAT Information
- Building Better Teens: What is Spilling Out of Your Cup?
- Student Assistance Program (SAP)

Are You Wishing Your Life Away? Six Tips for Making the Best of Your Reality

By Anabel Jensen – October 14th, 2020 from
“6 Seconds: The Emotional Intelligence Network”

The best of memories are made, even during challenging times.

Right now—many of us are making similar wishes: I wish this blasted virus would go away. I wish Covid-19 restrictions were over. I wish everything could return to normal. I wish I didn't have to social distance. I wish I didn't have to wear a mask. If I wash my hands one more time, they are going to dissolve.

I am feeling some of the strongest feelings I have ever experienced.

Fear, anxiety, loneliness, disappointment, anger, and even rage. Tasks which should be easy and fun have another side—hard and scary.

So, to help handle those feelings you may have been suppressing or stuffing, here are six (for Six Seconds) activities for the entire family to make the best of your current reality:

Six Tips to Make the Best of Your Current Reality:

1. “Name it to tame it”
2. Set a feelings goal
3. Hot cocoa breathing
4. Spaghetti poses
5. Build your safe place
6. “Anxietrige” your emotions

For the full article click [here](#)

Pennsylvania Governor's Schools

The Pennsylvania Governor's Schools are summer programs offered at universities across the state to provide rising high school **Juniors and Sophomores** with hands-on training and research in the sciences, technology and engineering, agricultural sciences and Global & International Studies. Below are links to obtain additional information.

Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Agricultural Sciences at Penn State University: (**Juniors only**) <https://agsci.psu.edu/school-for-excellence>

Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Sciences at Carnegie Mellon: (**Juniors only**) <http://sciences.pa-gov-schools.org/>

The Governor's School for Global and International Studies at University of Pittsburgh: (**Sophomores & Juniors**) <https://www.govschool.pitt.edu/>

Health Career Scholars Academy

The dynamic world of health care *plus* the expertise of University of Pittsburgh academics and facilities. This educational mixture shapes a unique, academically rigorous, hands-on campus experience for **sophomore** and **junior** students.

Health Career Scholars Academy at University of Pittsburgh
<http://www.hcsa.pitt.edu/>

Iacocca Global Entrepreneurship

The Iacocca Global Entrepreneurship Intensive brings American high school **sophomores** and **juniors** (ages 16-17) together with international high school students from all regions of the world for four weeks to live and learn together at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Iacocca Global Entrepreneurship at Lehigh University
<https://global.lehigh.edu/iacocca-institute/high-school/lehigh>

When to Apply to College as a Declared Major

Applying to College as Undecided Major: Pros, Cons

Don't declare a major on your college applications if you haven't fully researched that academic concentration.

By Bradford Holmes & Caroline Duda "US News & World Report"

The applications for many colleges and universities allow students to specify an intended major, though this is not required – and not all students ultimately choose to do so. In most cases, choosing to begin college as an undecided major or electing to declare a major before arriving on campus depends on an individual student's situation.

When to Apply to College as an Undeclared Major

- If you have a competitive concentration in mind and your GPA does not reflect your full potential
- You are truly undecided

When to Apply to College as a Declared Major

- Your major requires you to take a specific set of courses.
- Benefits that you would not receive if you wait.
- Additional forms of financial support.
- You distinguish your self and your portfolio.

Read full article [here](#)



Standardized Testing

SAT Test Dates	Registration Deadlines	Late Registration Deadlines
March 13	February 12	March 2
May 8	April 8	April 22
June 5	May 6	May 26

ACT Test Dates	Registration Deadlines	Late Registration Deadlines
February 6	January 8	January 15
April 17	March 12	March 26
June 12	May 7	May 21
July 17	June 18	June 25

January 26, 2021: PSAT rescheduled in school test date

Upcoming SAT & ACT dates are tentatively scheduled. Individual test centers may need to cancel or limit access due to COVID safety restrictions. Monitor the [College Board/SAT](#) and [ACT](#) websites for the most updated information.

[College Board \(SAT\) link](#)

[ACT link](#)

Transcript Requests

Transcript requests are processed within 2 days of receipt. Be aware of college application deadlines. Our office recommends that requests for documents to be sent to colleges are submitted 15 days prior to the deadline. This allows enough time for the documents to be sent, received and processed by the due date. For example, request documents by December 15th for a January 1st deadline. Last minute requests cannot be guaranteed for delivery by the due date. Transcripts are \$3 per college.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The following are webinars, recorded events and videos offered to help students and parents complete the FAFSA application for college financial aid.

PHEAA

Webinar/recording: ["Borrowing for Higher Education"](#). Follow the link and go to [view event recordings](#).

Sallie Mae

Webinar: ["A simpler, faster way to complete the FAFSA"](#).

Video series: ["Paying for College"](#).



Test Optional? Should I Still Take the SAT? Still Take the ACT?

By "Get Schooled"

In light of testing cancellations and obstacles created by COVID-19 more than half of all 4-year colleges have decided to go "test optional" for Fall 2021 admissions (and possibly beyond).

This means SAT or ACT scores are not necessarily a required part of the application. You may now be wondering if you should still take the SAT or ACT. We've answered some of your questions on these recent changes to admissions testing to help you decide if you should (or should not) take the SAT or ACT to prepare for the college applications process.

What does "test optional" mean?

If I end up taking the SAT or ACT, do I have to submit my score?

If I don't take the SAT or ACT will it hurt my application?

What are the benefits of taking the SAT or ACT even if my school doesn't require a test score?

For answers to these questions read the full article [here](#).

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

opens October 1st.

To begin your application go to: [fafsa.ed.gov](#) or the [myStudentAid Mobile App](#)

Make sure to register for your FSAID at [fsaid.ed.gov](#)

For more information on the application process, go to [PHEAA's Student Aid Guide](#) (Available in English & Spanish)

Additional resources: [5 Steps to Financial Aid](#), [FAFSA Help](#), or [Filling Out the FAFSA Form](#)



Please continue to check Naviance and the School Counseling Office website for updated information about available scholarships.

This month's featured scholarship search website :



BUILDING BETTER TEENS

What is Spilling Out of Your Cup?

Consider this:

You are holding your cup of coffee when someone comes along and bumps into you making you spill your coffee everywhere. Why did you spill the coffee? You spilled the coffee, because there was coffee in your cup. Had there been tea in your cup, you would have spilled tea. The point is, whatever is inside the cup is what will spill out.



Therefore, when life comes along and shakes you (which will happen), whatever is inside you will come out. It's easy to fake it until you get rattled. So, we have to ask ourselves, "What's inside my cup?" When life gets tough, what spills out? Joy, gratefulness, peace, and humility? Or do anger, bitterness, harsh words, or reactions come out?

You choose! Today, let's work towards filling our cups with gratitude, forgiveness, joy, words of affirmation, kindness, gentleness, and love for others.

- unknown

A dear friend of mine sent me this story recently. It made me think.... What *is* spilling out of my cup? For anyone who deals with teenagers, it is an important question to ask because adolescents are always watching how adults respond to situations.

As parents, teens can test us on a daily basis. They can "rattle" us in a myriad of ways. Our response can be a glimpse into our own outlook on life. Do we embrace mistakes as learning opportunities? Do we react to difficult problems with compassion? Do we have a sense of humor about the craziness of life?

Take some time to reflect on what spills out of your cup. What are you subtly teaching your child about how to face adversity? Grab your cup and fill it with a good attitude. smp

SAP CORNER

Are You Worried About A Child?

We can help children experiencing barriers to learning.

What Is SAP?



The ACCHS SAP team is made up of school and agency staff that are available to help families access school and community resources to help students. In Pennsylvania, every school district is required to have a plan for identifying and assisting students who experience barriers to learning.



The SAP team will help families find services and assistance within the school, and if needed, in the community. We do not diagnose, treat, or refer for treatment. We will provide families with information so they can make the choice that best fits their needs and wishes.

Referrals to SAP can be made by parents, teachers, staff, students, or any concerned person. Students seeking help may refer themselves. The referral is confidential, but it can be made anonymously if preferred. Referral forms can be found on the SAP section of the school website by following this [link](#). Once the form is completed, it can be returned to the locked boxes outside the School Counseling Office, Campus Ministry or the Chapel, or mailed to:

Allentown Central Catholic HS 301 N. 4th St. Allentown, PA 18102 ATTENTION: SAP Team.

IF YOU ARE CONCERNED THAT A STUDENT IS A DANGER TO SELF OR OTHERS, PLEASE CALL SAFE2SAY AT 1-844-SAF2SAY (1-844-723-2729).