

# BUILDING RESILIENCE

*TUSD Mental Health Services Newsletter*



Please join us in appreciating the images on this page which include some of our wonderful counselors and Mental Health Services team members at this week's OCDE Counselor Symposium and other collaborative opportunities.

## Celebrating Counselors

*By Yenyfer Bullock, LMFT*

School counselors play an integral role in helping students reach their full potential, and their contributions deserve to be celebrated. While their fundamental expertise may be centered around education psychology, school counselors are often experts in an array of other areas such as academics, therapeutic modalities, social work, career development, and more. Indeed, school counselors have the unique ability to understand and bring together the complexities of the individual student, their life in the classroom, and their prospects for the future.

TUSD has different types of counselors; School Counselors, Mental Health Specialists, and School Social Workers. Their importance to the success of students, teachers, and schools cannot be overstated. It takes passion, diligence, and creativity to perform this job well. Today and every day, let us celebrate the hard work and dedication of school counselors, who are truly making a positive difference in this world.



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## Self Care in the Time of Valentines

by Jessica Erickson, PPS, LPCC

"You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection." -Buddha

Valentine's day is almost here. Yup, it's that time of year where the stores fill up with sweet heart-shaped chalky candy, commercialized cards, and chocolate Hershey's kisses.

Depending on where you are in life, Valentine's Day can be an incredible day or an incredibly irritating one. Those of you who find this day irritating and commercialized, let me reframe another way of looking at this sentimental day.

Valentine's Day can be perceived in various different ways. You can see it as a romantic day with a significant other, flower, cards, chocolates, the works, or as a day where you practice self care. Instead of receiving flowers, cards, and candy, you could bring flowers to someone who is grieving or who is mending a broken heart, buy them for yourself, or all of the above. You could write and mail, yes you read that correctly, mail a thank you card to a family member, colleague, or friend expressing how much you appreciate them, or buy your favorite candy for yourself or share with others.

You could volunteer at a homeless and/or animal shelter, hospital, help a neighbor in need, donate items, or raise funds for an important cause to name a few.

Self-care could also include giving yourself permission to take a relaxing day maybe even two to slow down, unplug, and recharge. When you become aware of the importance of self-care, your brain switches gears and invites more opportunities for rejuvenating your mind, body, and heart. Before you know it, Valentine's day becomes less irritating and more a meaningful reminder to make time to care for yourself. This brings me to a popular self care technique called **Loving Kindness Meditation** (LKM). Essentially, in a quiet and seated position, you repeat the following phrases to yourself:

May I be happy, May I be safe, May I be healthy,  
May I live with ease.

Then you silently repeat to yourself the same phrase while visualizing someone you love and then someone you may not love as much which makes LKM a bit challenging. It takes practice, consistency and time to learn how to receive love and send love to others. The idea is to free yourself from negative emotions while strengthen your capacity for compassion towards yourself and the people in your life.

Leo Buscaligia, a popular college professor who taught a class on love, said, to love others, you must love yourself. "You can only give to others what you have yourself." As we near another Valentine's day, find ways to care for yourself and then others. You might find yourself feeling more love and less irritated.

[Click Here Below for Sample](#)

10-MINUTE

**Guided Meditation:  
Self-Love**

SELF

ALL LOVE BEGINS WITH SELF-LOVE



## Promoting Self-Love in Students

by Daisy Juarez, LMFT

February is the month of love and friendship. Showing love and kindness to others is very important, however, focusing on SELF- LOVE is just as important! But what exactly is self-love? Self-love means seeing your own worth and appreciating who you are (mistakes and all).

Too often students fall into the pit of negative self-talk. This may look like “I NEVER get it right.” “I’m not smart.” or “I’m so dumb.” Learning self-love is an important skill for students to learn to increase their self-esteem and self-worth. Often, adults assume that self-love is something that comes naturally to children, but really it is a skill that should be modeled and taught to children.

### Benefits of Self-Love

Practicing self-love can have positive benefits in student’s overall well-being. Psychology Today reported three major benefits of practicing self-love including:

1. Increased Resiliency
2. Increased Productivity
3. Decrease in Stress

High resiliency, lower stress levels, and high productivity are skills beneficial to student both in and out of the classroom. An increase in resiliency and productivity often correlates with higher academic achievements. The more self-love our students have for themselves, the happier and better regulated they will be.

Ways to practice self-love:

1. **Use positive self-talk.** Positive talk is speaking with kindness and grace to yourself. You can practice this with your child by using words of affirmations. For example, “I am brave. I am strong. I can do hard things.”
2. **Have a growth mind set.** Growth mindset is being able to learn from your mistakes. Growth mindset includes believing that you can be better and achieve success with time and effort.
3. **Model self-love.** Children learn from what they see! This means that if adults speak to themselves with kindness, compassion, and forgiveness your child will also learn to do that for themselves!
4. **Promote self-care.** Teaching self-care and emotional regulation to children will help them grow into better regulated adults. Teaching self-care will help children understand that they are important and to prioritize their own needs.

Here are some simple self-care ideas for children:

- Play with a pet
- Art/draw
- Play outside
- Take a nap
- Ride a bike

HERE ARE SOME SHORT YOUTUBE VIDEOS TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN SELF-LOVE!





# Healthy Boundaries as an Act of Self-Love

by Angela Kirkman, LCSW

Healthy personal boundaries are critical in developing and maintaining self-love. If you think of personal boundaries as buffers, these boundaries are the things that protect us from compromising our happiness, standards and sense of inner peace. Boundaries keep our mental and emotional well-being safe.

Does the idea of setting boundaries make you feel anxious? You're not alone. Many of us are people pleasers and will compromise our wants or needs consistently so that we don't disappoint others. This can be a vicious pattern, however, because when you fail to protect your peace you'll likely find a deep sense of unhappiness or resentment building.

It's one thing to say that boundaries are important but going about setting them is a different matter. It can be difficult! There may be pushback from friends or family members who struggle to understand or adapt to your self-advocacy. However, just because someone reacts poorly to you setting a boundary doesn't mean you were wrong in setting it. So how do we go about setting healthy boundaries?

1. Determine what your limits are. Define them specifically. You can ask yourself: Are there things in your life that you consistently dread? Is there unnecessary stress in your life? Do you find yourself resenting people or things often? What kinds of things bring you joy? What do you look forward to? Questions like these will help in learning what limitations you have and what boundaries you then need to set.
2. Communicate boundaries honestly and openly. It would be a mistake to assume others will know on their own. Social psychology researcher Brene Brown has said, "Clear is kind, unclear is unkind." Examples of this kind of communication are:

"I know you're going through a hard time now and I want to support you, but I don't have the emotional capacity to listen right now. Can we talk in an hour/tomorrow?"

"I can only stay for an hour."

"It makes me uncomfortable when you (insert act)."

"I'm not willing to discuss this subject right now."

1. Repeat and hold to your boundaries. It can take time for others to get used to this change. You'll likely need to teach them and be patient as they adjust. Remember to stay consistent to your decision and avoid changing or removing a boundary for someone else's comfort.
2. Learn how to say "no." This word is short and powerful but many find it difficult to say. It's as if society has programmed us to feel guilty for using it. But the more you say yes the more commitments you'll have, which can lead to burn out, unhappiness and resentment. When you say no to something it leaves you open to say yes to something else that is a better fit for you. We often qualify our "no's" with the many reasons why, or even with an apology. Practice saying things like:

"That doesn't work for me."

"Let me check my schedule and I'll get back to you later."

"I have a lot on my plate right now so I'm going to have to say no."

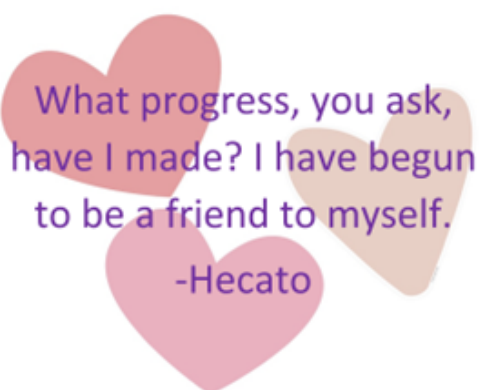
"I'll think about it and let you know."

"Thanks for the offer/invite but that's a no for me."

You don't owe others an explanation for declining something.

Take time for yourself. Making yourself a priority and spending time taking care of yourself is linked to amazing things like emotional stability, confidence and less rates of burnout. Try setting aside 2 hours each week of dedicated "me time" and see if you notice a positive change.

What healthy boundaries can you set for yourself as a way to practice self-love?



# Upcoming Events!

TUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTS

## Random Act of Kindness Week Celebration

FEBRUARY 13TH-FEBRUARY 16TH

- FEBRUARY 13TH- KINDNESS GRAMS IN THE PLAZA
- FEBRUARY 14TH-FRIENDSHIP BRACELET MAKING
- FEBRUARY 15TH-YOU'RE MY "ROCK"DECORATING
- FEBRUARY 16TH- CHALK WALK & LOVE SONG PLAYLIST IN THE PLAZA

#RANDOMACTSOFKINDNESS2023

Orange County Department of Education  
Educational Services Division  
School-Based Violence Prevention Education Series

**Crisis Response Network (CRN)**  
**Supporting Your Child During Times of Crisis**  
*Offered for Parents and Caregivers*

**Date:**  
Tuesday, February 21, 2023

**Time:**  
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

**Location of Training:**  
Virtual (Zoom link to follow)

*Presentation Offered at No Cost*

**Training Highlights**

- Common stress reactions after a crisis
- Grief responses and feelings children may experience after a loss
- Explore supportive practices parents can immediately incorporate within their family

**To Register:**  
<https://ocde.k12oms.org/1255-229618>

**For more info. or to schedule a presentation, please contact:**  
**Summer Cirino, CRN Project Assistant**  
Phone: 714-966-4290  
Email: [s.cirino@ocde.us](mailto:s.cirino@ocde.us)

Funded by: Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA), Mental Health and Recovery Services, Prevention and Intervention, Mental Health Services Act/Prop. 63

When a child experiences a crisis or a death, it can be difficult to know how to help your child cope. How much children understand about a crisis and loss depends largely on their age, life experiences and personality. Some children appear to cope well independently or with their own support networks; others are at risk for not coping at all. Through this presentation, we bring light to the importance of teaching our children resilience and how to return to a functional well-being or new "normal" after a crisis.

Event aligns with:  
LCAP Bucket: Engagement  
LCAP Priority #: 3  
MTSS Domain: Family & Community Engagement

Should you need additional assistance, please contact [mavillegas@ocde.us](mailto:mavillegas@ocde.us). OCDE may take photographs of participants at the event. These photographs might be used to document the event, promote events in written materials, posted on the OCDE website or supplemental webpages, or on the digital frame in the entry to OCDE offices.

StigmaFreeOC

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**Tustin Unified School District**

## Elementary Caregiver Workshops

All workshops are at 9:00 am

**Positive Parenting** 2/23/2023  
Learn about Positive Parenting strategies to support the development and wellbeing of your student. Explore what strategies might be helpful for other parents and discuss how to support our children through caring for our own well-being.

**Re-Connecting With Your Kids** 3/2/2023  
We know that parenting does not come with instructions, so if you feel off track as your kids are growing, that is normal! In this workshop we will explore the benefits of a parent/caregiver and child relationship and discuss strategies to build relationships and trust. We will review strategies to try to get you back on track!

**Encouraging Positive Behaviors** 3/9/2023  
Behaviors are communication from our children. During this workshop, we will learn about behavior and how to understand what our children are trying to communicate to us. We will also review strategies to promote positive behaviors and how to respond to undesired behaviors.

## Join Zoom Here:

These presentations are offered free of charge to parents, guardians and caregivers of Tustin Unified School District Students, in collaboration with the Orange County Department of Education Mental Health Student Services Act Grant.



# Resources

## SUICIDE PREVENTION TIPS FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

Effective Communication and Support

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

IN A CRISIS?

Text **HOME** to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor

Free 24/7 support at your fingertips.

Text Us



## About the Mental Health Services Program

The Mental Health Services (MHS) team is made up of clinically trained therapists. Our MHS team has grown significantly over the past five years to meet the mental health needs of all TUSD students. We provide individual and group counseling to general education students. Additionally, we facilitate workshops, offer consultation, and collaborate with local community agencies. Students are referred for therapeutic services by their principal and school counselor.

As a team, we aim to be recognized as an entity of support to general education students affected by social-emotional hindrances which prevent them from achieving their educational goals. Moreover, the Mental Health Services Team seeks to project a broad psychoeducational impact by normalizing mental health services throughout the district.

