

BUILDING RESILIENCE

TUSD Mental Health Services Newsletter

Vol. 3, Issue 1

WELCOME BACK!

Back to school this year is extra special. We feel the optimism in the air, and we know that means our resilience is showing! Our Mental Health Services (MHS) team is happy and ready to support TUSD students and their families through individual services, small group, school events, parent support through workshops, and more. You will find more resources and events in this newsletter, so keep checking back for updates in every issue. Cheers to a healthy and adventurous school year

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MHS TEAM

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.



Support Systems



Coping Skills

5 STEPS TO DEAL WITH BACK TO SCHOOL WORRIES



By Tracey Carson, LMFT
MHS at Orchard Hills, Benson,
and Foothill HS (Sub)

Step 1- Take Care of the Basics

Ensure your child is getting enough sleep, eating regular meals and healthy snacks and has daily exercise. When your child's mind and body are nourished, tackling school worries is easier.

Step 2- Have Empathy

Listen to your child's concerns. What is s/he worried about? Why does s/he expect that to happen? Let your child share his/her fears and talk about what's on his/her mind. There may be good opportunities to simply listen to your child when you are in the car, standing in line at the store, at bath-time or during dinner. For some kids and teens this "casual" method of talking feels less intense and makes it easier for them to express themselves.

Step 3- Problem-Solve

Once you know what's bothering your child, you can start to develop a coping plan. Anxious youth are often poor problem solvers and doubt their ability to cope. Addressing your child's fear head on, by creating an active plan with concrete solutions, will significantly reduce the worry.



Step 4- Focus on the Positive

Ask your child, "What are three things that you are most excited about on your first day of school?" Most kids can think of something good, even if it's just eating a special snack or going home at the end of the day. Chances are the fun aspects are simply getting overlooked by repetitive worries.

Step 5- Pay Attention to Your Own Behavior

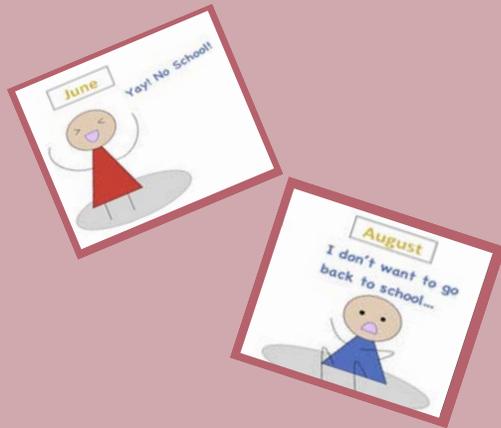
For parents of younger children or children starting at a new school, it can be anxiety-provoking for parents to hand over care and responsibility of their child to teachers. Children take cues from their parents, so the more confidence and calm you can model, the more your child will believe s/he can handle this new hurdle. Be supportive yet firm. When saying goodbye in the morning, say it cheerfully - once! Ensure you don't reward your child's protests, crying, or tantrums by allowing him/her to stay home. Instead, in a calm tone, say: "I can see that going to school is making you scared, but you still have to go. Tell me what you are worried about, so we can talk about it."

FINDING MEANING IN GRIEF (BACK TO SCHOOL EDITION)



By Jessica Erickson, LPC
MHS at Myford, Estock, and
Guin Foss

Well, it's that time again, when the sounds of summer fade into the background of yet another school year. The memories of all the fun experiences you had with friends and family fill your heart and brain with joy. Suddenly, just as you adjust to this leisurely summer schedule, you are blindsided with yet another change. You notice a feeling in the pit of your stomach or chest as another transition arrives. The time to let go of the summer and step into a new school year can commonly be a rough transition for both parents and students. Let's explore the transition from summer to fall within the context of the stages of grief developed by Swiss American psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler Ross.



Denial: Wait, summer is over? I don't believe it. I can't believe it. I won't believe it.

Anger: Why?! What?! Nooooooooooo!!

Bargaining: Maybe if I extend my vacation, I can also extend summer?

Depression: Tears.

Acceptance: sighs and tears.

Finding Meaning: Perhaps the loss of summer is a reminder that I need to do a better job of balancing my work life schedule.

Dr. David Kessler developed the sixth stage of grief, finding meaning. The renowned grief therapist worked closely with Kubler-Ross. He coined the concept of meaning when he experienced the untimely death of his son. He felt that in order to accept change or loss in your life you must find your own meaning to it. He believed his experience could not be understood fully through acceptance alone. He felt that finding meaning in the experience was necessary to process grief. He called this process post traumatic growth, finding meaning in adversity.

As we enter the new school year, take a moment to find meaning in the transition from summer to fall. Instead of focusing on the back to school blues, find solace in the fun summer moments you experienced and explore new ways to keep that energy in your life as a reminder to balance both summer and fall throughout the year. What will you find meaningful this upcoming school year? I suppose when you really think about it, the possibilities are endless.

Grief and Loss Resources



TEACHING KIDS PRODUCTIVITY



By Jacqueline Larios, ACSW
MHS at Beswick, Heideman,
and Loma Vista

If you have ever felt the mad rush after procrastinating everything you should have been doing over the course of a week, you know why productivity is important. On the contrary, if you have ever felt the positive burst of emotion that comes with being on top of your chores, work tasks, and hobbies, you have experienced the benefits of productivity.

Helping kids develop their work ethic may sound like an impossible task, but teaching kids productivity is both doable and important. Productivity is really a series of habits that help us get more done in less time, or help us do a better job over a shorter period. These habits can be taught to young children and practiced over the years, leaving them better prepared for school and later, the challenges of independent living (Cinelli, 2022).

Looking and Talking About Productivity

To be productive you need to be able to plan, prioritize, focus, and persevere through challenges, as well as recognize when it's time to take a step back.

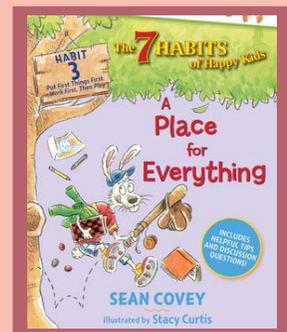
Kids might not necessarily understand the term "end-product quality," but you can talk to them about productivity in a way that reaches them best. "Children can better understand concepts through representation, so the use of books or stories can help them," notes Martha Horta-Granados, a teacher, psychologist, and psychology consultant for Sensible Gigs, (Cinelli, 2022).



A good book to read to younger children to help introduce and explain the concept of productivity is "**A Place for Everything: Habit 3**," by Sean Covey and Stacy Curtis. For older children, try "**Get Organized Without Losing It**," by Janet S. Fox and Steve Mark.

These books will teach children the importance of being organized and help them accomplish all of their daily goals. In addition to teaching children the meaning and importance of productivity, these resources can teach them some techniques and serve as a personal guide if you as a parent plan to focus on teaching this to your children.

Setting up a problem-solution scenario can be another good way to open a conversation about why productivity is important. For example, you might talk to your kids about the morning rush to get ready for school, or their teacher's report of missing homework. Then turn it over to them for possible solutions. In a guided conversation, come up with some plans, such as making a to-do list or completing homework first thing after coming home from school before playing.



TEACHING KIDS PRODUCTIVITY- PART 2

Why is Productivity Important?

Today's world is competitive and sometimes over-scheduled. Kids are feeling the effects of this, with 7% of children ages 3 to 17 dealing with anxiety. The number of children with anxiety, depression, and focusing problems is on the rise, (Cinelli, 2022). Better time management can reduce stress and help kids be more successful in school.

"In a globalized world where demands may exceed individuals' personal capabilities, having skills such as mastering productivity is essential to achieve personal and professional goals in the future...If children are taught from an early age to be organized with their school and homework, tolerate frustration, concentrate when carrying out a task, and persevere in their objectives, they are being taught skills that will prepare them for academic success and their professional future," (Horta-Granados, 2022)..

Tips and Tricks?

Daily To-Do List

Visual reminders tend to be very helpful for kids. Pre-readers can have a list drawn in pictures or you can print out photos of your child doing each task to post. You can use a written list for older children.

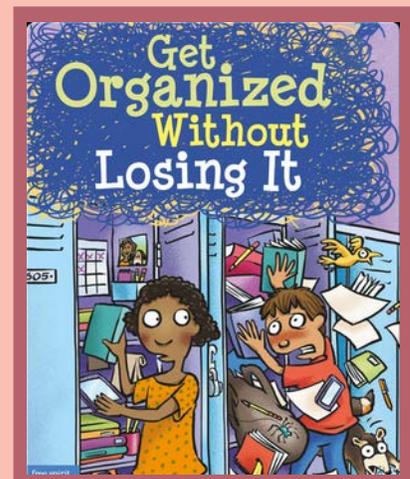
Calendar

Using a calendar helps introduce kids to the concept of time on a larger scale, allowing them to learn about planning ahead. Repeating weekly chores, such as wiping down floorboards or doing a load of laundry, work well posted up on a calendar. Choosing more specific chores, like vacuuming the hall, as opposed to cleaning the house, which is too vague, helps kids be successful. You can also write in when they will be able to play outside or use their screen time, which helps teach them that both being productive and resting are important.

Frustration Tolerance

Frustration is inevitable, and if you don't have the skills to push through it, one of many small inconveniences can derail productivity. Letting young children experience frustration is an important part of helping them deal with it. For example, you don't have to rush in to help your child build a tower that's difficult or close a snap they are struggling with. Even just waiting a short period until they ask for help is a good first step.

During the times that your child does get overwhelmed by emotion, provide a safe, calming space for them to begin to feel their feelings and work through them. This might be in your lap or together with you in their room as you model deep breaths. Some kids calm best when they are left alone. It depends on your individual child, and the end goal is helping them learn how to calm down when they experience strong feelings.



TEACHING KIDS PRODUCTIVITY- PART 3



Model Productivity

No matter how much we say, what we do ourselves has the greatest impact on our kids. Write up your own daily schedule and post it somewhere that your kids will notice. Make your own calendar, and get your chores done when you come home before stretching out on the sofa to enjoy a hot drink and your favorite TV show.

Narrate, telling your kids something like, "I'm so glad my chores are done so I can have relaxation time," Or tell them

how happy you are that you have finished your tasks so you can spend some time with them. Modeling both productive habits and relaxation habits will help set your child up for success.

Productivity is a life skill that can benefit kids in many ways. Good time management, the ability to focus and persevere through challenges, and strong emotional regulation are all part of productivity. It's also crucial that your children know that it's OKAY to take a break sometimes and that they don't have to be productive 24/7. You can teach your kids how to be more productive in many small ways. Developing these habits will help prepare them for a happier and more successful life.

REVIEW - WHEN TO SEEK MHS SUPPORT

At TUSD, we are fortunate to have a dedicated team of counselors and therapists who support general education students. If your student is experiencing any one or more of the following, you may contact your school administrator or counselor for support or guidance:

- Has dramatic changes in behaviors, appetite, or sleep needs
- Spends most of their time alone instead of with friends or family
- Has declining grades or interest in school
- Is suddenly hyperactive, impulsive or has trouble concentrating
- Is self-destructive or overly aggressive toward others
- Is no longer interested in activities they used to enjoy

Mental health services are offered on instances when short term services is the most appropriate support for the presenting issue.

For families who would rather go through a private or community provider, we recommend our partner, CareSolace. CareSolace takes care of the research and connects families directly to providers. You can ask your counselor or MHS for form information or you can go directly through [CareSolace](#).

care-solace



Calming The Chaos of Mental Health Care.

SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH!

We have been working every year on suicide prevention. Always staying on top of research, statistics, and best practices for suicide assessment and prevention in the schools. This year we are putting together resources for staff and students at every level during Suicide Prevention Month and beyond, such as:

- Updates to our procedures for assessment
- Increase training of staff who can screen and assess
- Comprehensive re-entry procedures after hospitalization
- Resource booth during for secondary schools
- Wellness activities for elementary schools
- Collaboration with outside agencies who provide training and resources
- Updating the 988 lifeline number on resources

Take Action For Suicide Prevention
Know the Signs • Find the Words • Reach Out

Thrivning At All Ages

Suicide Prevention Resources
All resources available 24/7

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) Veterans: Press 1 En Espanol: 1-888-628-9454 For Deaf & Hard of Hearing: 1-800-799-4889	The Trevor Project Phone, chat, and text support for LGBTQ+ youth. 1-866-488-7386 www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now/
Text "HOPE" to 741-741 Text with a trained counselor from the Crisis Text Line for free, 24/7	Friendship Line 1-800-971-0016 Crisis and warm line for adults 60 years and older operated by Institute on Aging

For mental health resources visit the Take Action for Mental Health campaign at www.takeaction4mh.com

suicideispreventable.org

Funded by counties through the Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63).

Sample resource cards available to students:



If you or someone you know needs support now, call or text **988** or chat 988lifeline.org

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

PEP22-08-03-001

IN A CRISIS?
Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor

Free 24/7 support at your fingertips.

We believe it is important recognize the disproportionate high risk for suicide found in students who identify as part of the LGBTQA+ community. We encourage you to learn more here:

THE TREVOR PROJECT

SEPTEMBER 4TH -9TH IS SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK AT TUSD

Secondary MHS Team members put together resources with their respective schools. They created a traveling booth that provided information and offered an opportunity for students and staff to learn more about suicide prevention, who their support system is at school, and how they can help support their peers. Here is a peek into the amazing week:

Utt Middle School



Hillview High



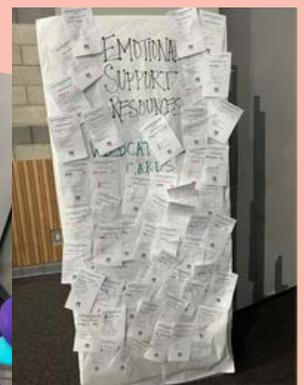
Beckman High



Hewes Middle School



Pioneer Middle School



UPCOMING EVENTS AND RESOURCES



Tustin Unified School District

Elementary Caregiver Workshops

All workshops are at 10:00 am

Bullying 101 10/12/22

Dealing with bullying behaviors can be challenging for students and caregivers. This presentation discusses how to recognize bullying behaviors, dealing with "just kidding", how to support your student and prevention strategies.

Positive Parenting 10/19/22

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.

Join us on Zoom Here:

Scan this QR to Register or click [HERE](#).



Screen Time and Mental Health

10/26/22

Explore the benefits and concerns associated with social media/gaming and your student's mental health. Identify how to balance screen time, create a plan for gaming and social media usage and identify potential concerns in your student's mental wellness.

Seeking Support 11/9/22

In this workshop we will explore what to do when you think your student might need support, provide information on resources available within Tustin Unified School District. We will also discuss what to expect when you seek services and share about community services that can support your family.

Stress Management

11/16/22

Support yourself and your student through stressful situations as we identify positive and negative impacts of stress, explore how to talk to your student about stress and work to identify stress management strategies.

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.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND RESOURCES-CONTINUED



Tustin Unified School District

Caregiver Workshops

All workshops are at 12:30 pm

Bullying 101 10/12/22

Dealing with bullying behaviors can be challenging for students and caregivers. This workshop discusses how to recognize bullying behaviors, dealing with "just kidding", how to support your student and prevention strategies.

Positive Parenting 10/19/22

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.

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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.

Mental Health 101 10/26/22

Identify what mental health is, discuss myths and facts about mental health. This workshop will also explore symptoms of common childhood mental health concerns while identifying coping strategies to support your student.

Stress Management 11/9/22

Support yourself and your student through stressful situations as we identify positive and negative impacts of stress, explore how to talk to your student about stress and work to identify stress management strategies.

Screen Time and Mental Health 11/16/22

Explore the benefits and concerns associated with social media/gaming and your student's mental health. Identify how to balance screen time, create a plan for gaming and social media usage and identify potential concerns in your student's mental wellness.

Please direct questions and comments about this issue of Building Resilience to the Mental Health Specialist Team Lead, Yenyfer Bullock, LMFT at ybullocketustin.k12.ca.us