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H E A L T H

The Impact of COVID-19 on Mental
Health: How to Address Depression,
Anxiety, Addiction & Other
Conditions

Introductions

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Manager School Based Mental Health, Canvas Health

- Sandy Woolsey MA LPCC LAMFT

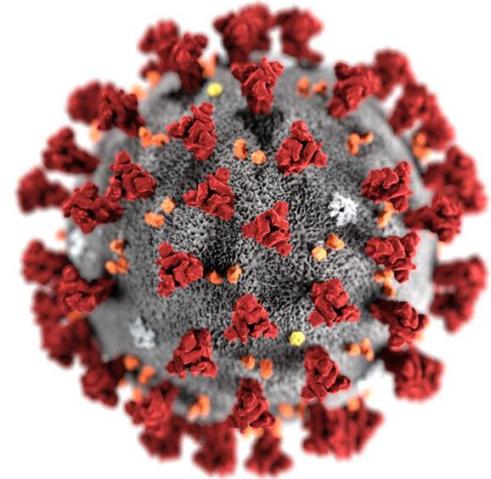
Supervisor School Based Mental Health, Canvas Health

- Cassie Ryan , MSE

School Psychologist Intern, Hastings High School

How is Covid-19 Affecting Youth?

- Everyone is different.
- Increased suicide ???
- Increased school failure
- Increased hospitalizations
- Increased anxiety
- Increased sleep disorders
- Increased depression
- Financial stress and worry
- Grief and loss
- Drug and Alcohol use



Contributing factors

Uncertainty

Social Isolation/Loneliness(which may affect students to a bigger degree)

Parental angst

Screen Time

Pre-existing risk factors (cognitive abilities, special needs, socio-ecological factors, trauma history, other mental health needs)

Racial Trauma

Political Angst



Impressions from our therapists:

“For the high school, I think it is safe to say that the percentage of students who learn best in distance learning is fairly slim. Students across the board are struggling academically with the lack of structure, and also can feel overwhelmed by too many Zoom meetings per day. Zoom meetings do not feel the same as attending class in school. Family tension is increased with everyone working from home and doing school at home and wearing both hats of being a parent and professional at the same time. Students, particularly those with a diagnosis of ADHD, are struggling with procrastination and falling behind in classes. I see depression, anxiety, isolation, and overall family stress has increased. When tension and anxiety is increased for the whole family, it can be more challenging to find understanding for teenagers who it seems are avoiding school work and scrolling on their phones or playing video games.”

-Amanda Olson LICSW

Mental Health Diagnoses in Youth

Anxiety

- Excessive anxiety and worry
- Difficulty controlling the worry
- Restlessness
- Easily Fatigued
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Irritability
- Muscle Tension
- Sleep Disturbance

Depression

- Depressed Mood
- Diminished interest/pleasure in activities
- Weight loss or gain (not due to dieting)
- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Agitation
- Feeling worthless or excessive guilt
- Difficulty concentration
- Recurrent thoughts of death/suicidal ideation



Addiction

- Taking larger amounts over time for the same effect (tolerance)
- A desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control use
- Cravings
- Use getting in the way of major obligations
- Interpersonal problems due to use
- Giving up on important activities due to use
- Using when it is physically hazardous
- Withdrawal symptoms

Grief and Loss

- Grief is a NATURAL reaction to loss
- Common Reactions include:
 - Shock, disbelief or denial
 - Anxiety
 - Distress
 - Anger
 - Periods of Sadness
 - Loss of sleep

Adjustment Disorder

- Development of emotional/behavioral symptoms in response to an identifiable stressor
- Marked distress that is out of proportion to the stressor
- Significant impairment in social, occupational, or other areas of functioning
- (can have depressed symptoms, conduct, anxiety symptoms of a mix)

Trauma and Other Stress Related Disorder

- Symptoms cause clinical distress and impairment in social, occupational, or other areas of functioning
- Negative changes in mood or cognitions after the event

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- Trauma-experiencing or learning about a traumatic event
- includes reoccurring thoughts of the event and attempts to avoid reminders of it.





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HEALTH

Stress and the Brain:

https://www.ted.com/talks/madhu_mita_murgia_how_stress_affects_your_brain/transcript?language=en

The Good News:

We can teach students to react differently, remain calm and activate their “thinking brain.” And grow new neural connections!

- Mindfulness
- **Relationships**
- Calming/Sensory Strategies
- Co-regulating
- Yoga
- New safe experiences

Add mindfulness to your day
in only 10-15 minutes

Here are 4 ways to add mindfulness to your schedule, each way only takes 10-15 minutes of your time:



The infographic is a circular diagram with four segments, each containing a mindfulness practice. The segments are: 1. Top-left (light green): 'Do a body scan paying attention to any tension or stress.' with a clock icon. 2. Top-right (light green): 'Start your day with a basic yoga sun salutation.' with a sun icon. 3. Bottom-right (teal): 'Take a break to check in with your breathing.' with a briefcase icon. 4. Bottom-left (teal): 'Relax at the end of the day with a guided meditation.' with a moon icon. In the center of the circle are three curved arrows forming a clockwise loop.

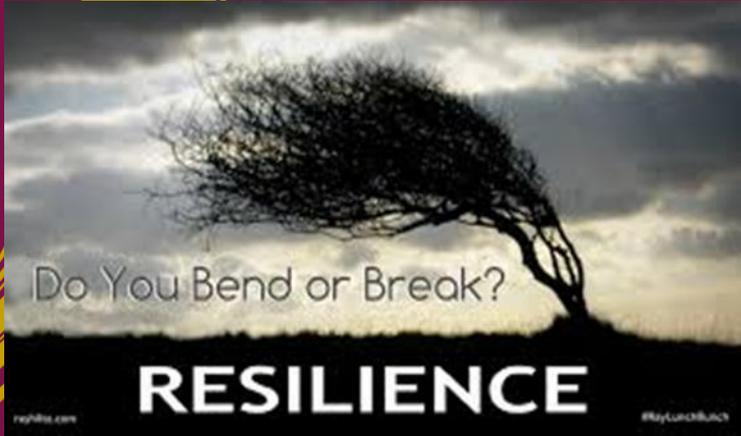
***Remember consistency is key**



Resiliency:

Defined by Merriam-Webster's Dictionary as

- 1:** the capability of a strained body to recover its size and shape after deformation caused especially by compressive stress
- 2:** an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change





What makes some kids more resilient than others?

Mastery: how much perceived control individuals have over their life and circumstances.

Social support: supportive people that kids can have open communication with about past experiences and other topics.

From the National Institute of Nursing Research 2015

More on Resilience and The importance of Building Webs of support:

“The most significant determinant of resilience — noted in nearly every review or study of resilience in the last 50 years — is the quality of our close personal relationships, especially with parents and primary caregivers. Early attachments to parents play a crucial, lifelong role in human adaptation.”

“How loved you felt as a child is a great predictor of how you manage all kinds of difficult situations later in life,” said Bessel van der Kolk, a professor of psychiatry at Boston University School of Medicine ”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/18/health/resilience-relationships-trauma.html>



We are going back to school so everything will be back to normal right???

Considerations:

Change/Transitions are hard

Increased anxiety

Less practice with Social Situations

Brain changes?

Tolerance/Stamina for long days

Self Care for Parents during Covid (and beyond!)

What can we do as parents to cope, de-stress, get through this?

PRN Framework created by Diana Tikasz, 2020.

From NCTSN (National Child Traumatic Stress Network)

PRN Pause-Reset-Nourish to promote wellbeing

PRN

Pause: Check in with how your body is feeling at the present moment.

- Take a slow, conscious diaphragmatic (belly) breath. Repeat 3 times.
- There are many ways to ‘breathe’: square breathing, 3-3-3 breathing. Find the one that fits for you.
- Turn your attention inward. Notice tension, where you may be holding stress, intense emotions, grieving the loss of routines.

PRN

Reset: Actively do something to help you feel steadier, more focused, calmer. Be kind to yourself!

- When you notice your mind is full reset by: meditation, taking a walk outside, stretch, take a mini mind-vacation to your happy place.
- When negative experiences are overwhelming: *acknowledge it*. Then try to reset by positive affirmations, sharing gratitude, talking with someone, practice grounding techniques.

PRN Reset cont.

- When unsure how you are feeling but recognize you are uncentered reset by: *observe* the feeling/thought/sensation; *acknowledge* it; let it *pass through* your mind like a cloud passing in the sky.
- When you become critical of yourself reset by: interrupting those thoughts with self-compassion and allowing yourself grace. What would you say to a friend who was experiencing something similar? Take your own advice.
- Bringing in the 5 senses (wrapping in a blanket, lighting a scented candle, drink warm tea or cold water)

PRN

Nourish: Engaging in something that replenishes your mind-body-heart-soul-spirit.

- Think about something that has been rewarding at work or home-how you helped someone, meaningful moments.
- Consider affirmations or reminders that help you feel prepared to deal with the stress or challenges you are facing.
- Engage in moments of playfulness, light-heartedness, create meaningful social connections with others. Engage in meaningful cultural activities, donate time to a charity, bake for a neighbor.

- Please **SHARE** ways you have found to care for yourself during the pandemic.



Helping our Kids through Covid-19

- Movement: play, Simon says, red-light/green light
- Create space for feelings-acknowledge, allow the feelings
- Incorporate practices to calm and restore connection
- Model in your own day what you would like for your children/teens to do: breathing, taking play breaks, movement, healthy eating, noticing your own feelings
- Establish clear routines
- Give opportunity for kids to have some control through choice
- Create a sense of security and hope

School Resources

- School Psychologist
- Your child's counselor
- School Social Worker
- If you believe your child is struggling outside of what is the realm of normal for these times, please reach out!

Engagement and Motivation Tips

- Demonstrate an authoritative approach to parenting by being both responsive and demanding.
- Use Praise and rewards wisely and strategically
- Closely monitor and assist with homework assignments, as appropriate
- Communicate the benefits of education and the importance of being engaged in school.
- Build from your child's interests, values, and goals, and offer choices to match them.

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Engagement and Motivation Tips cont.

- Encourage frequent self-evaluation
- Encourage self-compassion rather than social comparisons
- Provide variety, novelty and fun in instructional methods and learning activities.
- Challenge your child to set short-term and long-term goals and develop plans for achieving them.
- Take care of yourself.

Please share strategies you have found helpful for your kids.



The Therapeutic Assistance Program



- Canvas Health's school-based mental health program (TAP) provides on-site mental health services to students who may not otherwise be able to access mental health services. Mental health staff are located in schools and are uniquely situated to collaborate with school staff to effectively address mental health needs and improve student functioning at school and home.
- Therapy is billed to client's insurance. Schools have additional funding through their district, and DHS to help fund uncovered services, uninsured individuals, or those with high deductibles.



TAP therapist contact information for Hastings School District:

Hastings High School:



Amanda Olson, MSW, LICSW
aolson@canvashealth.org

Hastings Middle School
and Hastings ALC:



Deb Weess, MA, LP
dweess@canvashealth.org

McAuliffe, Pinecrest,
and Kennedy
Elementary Schools:



Ali Ryan, MA, LGSW
aryan@canvashealth.org

Resources/ websites for more information

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/02/02/962060105/child-psychiatrists-warn-that-the-pandemic-may-be-driving-up-kids-suicide-risk>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/01/29/962185779/make-space-listen-offer-hope-how-to-help-a-child-at-risk-of-suicide>

<https://www.psychiatrytimes.com/view/new-findings-children-mental-health-covid-19>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7267797/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6945a3.htm>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/18/health/resilience-relationships-trauma.html>

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/pause-reset-nourish-to-promote-wellbeing-use-as-needed-to-care-for-your-wellness>

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/you-can-practice-mindfulness-in-as-little-as-15-minutes-a-day>



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Thank You!

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