

CENTRAL SQUARE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Newsletter

2021 WINTER EDITION

Research has shown that we have more anxiety than ever before in the modern world. And right now, it can feel like the sand is getting kicked in our face at times.

Everyone is feeling some level of stress and can be easily triggered, which can have impact on relationships and learning. It is important to know that we do have control over how we respond to the circumstances of our lives and we have strategies to use that can settle our nervous system, opening up our hearts and brains to more effective ways of being in the world. This is the magic of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

This can be magic for relationships and learning!

Central Square Central School District has always been committed to students' well-being and, in a shift from our usual winter newsletter format, would like to dedicate this edition to our students and their parents or guardians to help make the best of a situation none of us had ever imagined. You will find helpful tips on stress management, inspirational quotes, helpful contacts if you need support, and examples of how our district is adapting to meet the educational and emotional needs of students - whether they're in the classroom or miles away.

Here you will also find a helpful March calendar with weekly themes, filled with simple exercise and workout instructions and small goals to make the best of each day. It is our hope that this newsletter will serve as a useful tool to keep you motivated and as a reminder of how we, as a community, came together at a moment of great need for our students to evolve in order to ensure our dedication to a quality education continues in every way.

"As One We Rise, Together We Soar."

CSSD Outreach Committee

Central Square Central School District





What is Your Emotional Wellness? Quiz



When we are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, we may not take as good care of our emotions as when things in our life are going well. It can be helpful to check in with yourself every once in a while to see how you are doing with taking care of your emotions. This quiz will help you do that! If you score high, keep doing what you're doing and try some of the activities in this pamphlet to strengthen your emotional wellness even more. If you score low, the activities in this pamphlet are a great starting point for putting focus on taking care of your emotional health and wellness.

Give them a try!

The emotional dimension involves recognizing, accepting and taking responsibility for your feelings.

Read each statement carefully and respond honestly by using the following scoring:

Almost always = 2 points

Sometimes/occasionally = 1 point

Very seldom = 0 points

- _____ 1. I am able to develop and maintain close relationships.
- _____ 2. I accept the responsibility for my actions.
- _____ 3. I see challenges and change as opportunities for growth.
- _____ 4. I feel I have considerable control over my life.
- _____ 5. I am able to laugh at life and myself.
- _____ 6. I feel good about myself.
- _____ 7. I am able to appropriately cope with stress and tension and make time for leisure activities.
- _____ 8. I am able to recognize my personal shortcomings and learn from my mistakes.
- _____ 9. I am able to recognize and express my feelings.
- _____ 10. I enjoy life.

_____ **Total for Emotional Wellness**



SCORE MEANING

15 to 20 Points--

Excellent strength in this dimension.

9 to 14 Points--

There is room for improvement. Look again at the items in which you scored 1 or 0. *What changes can you make to improve your score?*

0 to 8 Points--

This dimension needs a lot of work. Look again at this dimension and challenge yourself to begin making small steps toward growth here. *Remember: The goal is balanced wellness.*

Creating a Sense of Normalcy through Interactive, Engaging Software

Finding a sense of normalcy for students during times of remote learning has been one of the biggest goals for 10th-grade global history and ninth-grade honors teacher Amanda Petrie and, through the district's implementation of new learning software and her own creativity, she just may have found it.

Initially, when the district went fully remote in March 2020, Petrie said "the biggest hurdle to overcome was how to cover content in a meaningful way." Along with that concern, educators equally worked to ensure students could maintain social interaction.

Following the district's implementation of the Canvas learning management system in 2020, Petrie was able to find ways for students to collaborate and work together in real time almost as if they were in the classroom together.

"With this learning management system, I've been able to do discussions and kids can record themselves speaking," she said. "As kids are putting that stuff up, you feel that connection to them like they're not just sitting in front of a screen."

Jamboard, an interactive whiteboard system hosted by Google, is among Petrie's favorites as she describes it as "Google Slides on steroids."

"The kids can do a sticky note, post a picture and see everything live," Petrie explains. "They're having fun, they're giggling and it's good. It's great for being able to write."



Ensuring students' emotional and mental well-being is just as important to her as finding ways to encourage social interaction in the digital world.

"A lot of us are trying to think of silly things," she says. "I put up baby Yodas and ask, on a scale of 1-10 'How are you feeling today?' and in general we are being cognizant of how kids are feeling."

Until in-person learning is fully implemented again, Petrie remains dedicated to seeking new ways to encourage collaboration and social interaction.

Importance of having a daily routine

Daily routines are an important part of developing a healthy, productive lifestyle. Routines are made up of habits we have formed, both good and bad. These habits build into a daily routine that we usually don't even have to think about. A change in our routine or trying to start a new routine with new habits can be a challenge and stressful, but finding one can help energize us and organize our day and our thoughts. This routine can help decrease anxiety, save time, focus on important topics and maintain your well-being. Start small by adding in one new positive routine to your day and then each week you can add in another positive behavior to develop.

Examples of these positive additions may be drinking more water, starting the day with a healthy breakfast, meditation or exercise during the day, neatening up a workspace or setting an earlier bedtime. Adding one new healthy habit a week will help develop such a positive new lifestyle in less than two months!





31 Day

Central Square Central School District's Mindful March Calendar is filled with themed weeks, featuring useful tips to make the most of each day. Here you will find encouragement to find peace, laughter, gratitude and strength with friendly suggestions for the whole family.

“Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.”

~ William James



Week 1

Together We Soar:

This week is about being there for one another. We encourage you to spend time with your family and communicate what makes them special.

Week 2

Time for You:

Everyone needs a little “me time.” This week is about taking care of yourself from goal setting to stretching. It is important to find time where you are the focus.

Week 3

Try Something New:

It's never too late to try something new. This week is about exploration and pushing the limits.

Week 4

It's ok to ask for or need help:

We all could use a helping hand and also gain joy from lending one. This week we take care of others, forgive ourselves and be grateful.

Week 5

Live in the Moment:

This week is about appreciation for what we have. Try to take a step back from technology and immerse yourself in the small things.

Mindful March

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Tell your family about something that made you smile today	Tell your family about something you are grateful for	Give someone a compliment	Tell someone you are grateful for them and why	Go for a 10 minute walk with a family member	Sit at the table and eat dinner with your family if possible
Week 1 Theme: Together We Soar						
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Listen to your favorite song	Hold these three yoga poses for 1 minute each 	Find a quiet space and focus on your breathing for 5 mins. Breath in through the nose and out through the mouth, count to three as you inhale and again as you exhale.	Write down one goal that you want to achieve by the end of the month	Start your day with these three stretches 	Treat yourself to your favorite meal or snack	Create a collage of things that make you feel happy
Week 2 Theme: Time for you						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Learn a new skill together as a family	Set a new goal, and do one thing to achieve it	Find a new way to use a strength or talent	Try a new way to be physically active	Find a new way to support a cause you care about	Be curious, learn about something new	Find out something new about someone you care about
Week 3 Theme: Try something new						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Don't be hard on yourself - it's ok to not be ok once in a while	Create a plan to change "I can't, to...I can't yet"	Help someone in need - see if it gives you a boost too	Eat right, exercise, go to bed on time	Go for a walk to clear your head	If you can't change it, change the way you think about it	Write down 3 things to be grateful for
Week 4 Theme: It's ok to ask for or need help						
28	29	30	31			
No plans today, slow down and go with the flow	Get outside and notice 5 things that are beautiful	Stop and watch the sky or clouds for 10 minutes	Device free day (after school hours)...see what life has to offer			
Week 5 Theme: Live in the moment						



Millard Hawk teacher encourages students to talk about their feelings, ask for help when needed

Nancy Fritcher's fourth-grade students at Millard Hawk Elementary School know that, despite being miles apart, their teacher's friendly presence and willingness to listen if needed is only a mouse click away.

Before the pandemic began, Fritcher had been an intermediate user of Google Classroom and Chromebooks, having familiarized herself with digital learning technology platforms that had been emerging in recent years.

"Tied up into distance learning is the concept of digital and how comfortable you are with digital technology was kind of a precursor to how the transition went into distance learning," she said.

In the midst of grading and ensuring students are able to grasp what they're learning, Fritcher has made it a priority to remind students and parents she is always available to assist with concerns. As each child learns differently, Fritcher said their willingness to ask for help differs similarly.

Using resources from The Positivity Project, a nonprofit partner dedicated to helping students build stronger relationships by recognizing character strengths, she is able to better gauge students' feelings and concerns.

"I have some students who will email me two or three times a week on their own," she said. "I have a question of the day and it's linked directly to The Positivity Project and students have the opportunity to see a short video with response questions."



Fritcher says administrators did an excellent job in planning for remote learning, taking into account the schedules and needs of students, parents and teachers.

"The district set the teachers up with a best-case scenario because in the afternoon I have more time to contact families, work one-on-one with kids and work with small groups," she said. "Our contract day was designed to take into consideration how unique this year is."

If there is one takeaway for any student, Fritcher says it is important to remember help is available if needed.

"Make sure you're reaching out to the teacher, make sure you're reaching out to the administration," she said. "It's our job to create that common space when we're not seated in the same building."

The Brainy Bunch

Evyn and Tanner are rocking the virtual learning!

What are your kids doing?



Evyn



Tanner

check out "The Brainy Bunch" on our facebook Page! Share a Photo of your student and setup with us at tscee@citiboces.org to be featured on our social media

Listening Beyond the Music: Adapting and Understanding Students in Uncertain Times

The greatest lesson middle school band teacher Lidsey Ezzo has learned over the past year has little to do with music theory or time signatures.

"It's more than just the music for sure, especially this year," Ezzo said.

Between teaching and recording virtual Zoom lessons with approximately 150 students, Ezzo is patient and ready to listen to students' concerns and their feelings – even if that doesn't necessarily involve music.



"I think I've had more conversations during lessons just about how things are going and how they're feeling because, for so many of them, they really need that," she said.

Electives like band can be even more of a struggle for students who are remote than core classes, but through the Canvas learning management platform and Zoom, Ezzo is able to utilize new recording technologies to produce and mix music for ensembles.

While students in the past would have had to travel to a recording studio to record, they can now do so virtually from the convenience of any room in their house. Using Spotify's Soundtrap platform, Ezzo is able to edit and produce students' music.

"The instruction, as far as what we're doing, we're modifying it and it's fun," she said. "Students record directly to Canvas, we extract that file and convert it to a mp3 and put it in Soundtrap."

While remote learning has its challenges when it comes to music, Ezzo says students are learning to adapt to minor quirks like Zoom call lags and making sure their fingers are visible to check for proper technique and correct notes.

"Is it the wrong note? Is it the right note? Those fundamentals are the same," she said. "But it's definitely taken some time to adjust."



*Students catching up
on work in the library*





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Special Thanks: CSSD Outreach Committee!

Every school in our district has social emotional support teams that are here to support you!

Every school in our district has a team of staff members who are here to support students' and their family members' social and emotional well-being. If you are experiencing challenges related to school, stress in or out of school, difficult emotions, or difficult situations at home, you can reach out to any of the staff members below for help. You can also feel free to reach out to any of the staff members below if you have questions about what you are experiencing and need help understanding it. Staff members on our support teams will connect with you to talk about what is going on and make a plan for how they can help. That may be a plan to check in with you regularly, a plan to help you problem solve what is going on or a plan to connect you to resources outside of school that might be able to help you. We are here for you!

Student Social/Emotional Support Services CENTRAL SQUARE SCHOOL DISTRICT

PAUL V. MOORE HIGH SCHOOL 315-668-4231

School Counselors:

Elizabeth Sorbello (A to E),
Mitch Brousseau (F to Le),
Jim Petrella (Lf to Rn),
Tim Wales (Ro to Z)

School Psychologists:

Sue Ludwig and Kevin Wood

School Social Worker: Krystin Salmonsén

Social Worker Assistant: Susan Reichard

CENTRAL SQUARE MIDDLE SCHOOL 315-668-4218

School Counselors:

Tammy Evans (6th Grade),
Pam Winchek (7th Grade),
Tim LaRose (8th Grade)

School Psychologists:

Amy Albanese, Kevin Wood

School Social Worker: Krystin Salmonsén

Social Worker Assistants:

Susan Reichard, Jenny Trumble

A.A. COLE ELEMENTARY 315-668-4030

School Counselor: Beth Szlosek
School Psychologist: Scott Phillips
School Social Worker: Krystin Salmonsén

BREWERTON ELEMENTARY 315-668-4201

School Counselor: Beth Kring
School Psychologist: Deb Ostrowski
School Social Worker: Krystin Salmonsén
Social Worker Assistant: JoAnn Moskal

HASTINGS-MALLORY ELEMENTARY 315-668-4252

School Counselor: Beth Kring
School Psychologist: Jody Lewis
School Social Worker: Krystin Salmonsén
Social Worker Assistant: JoAnn Moskal

MILLARD HAWK ELEMENTARY 315-668-4310

School Counselors: Beth Szlosek
School Psychologist: Aynsley Kendall
School Social Worker: Krystin Salmonsén

Family and Support Services/Educational Advocacy

ORGANIZATION NAME: ARISE (PVM, CSMS)

Students with identified disabilities can receive support in connecting with community resources.

School Based Mental Health Clinicians

ORGANIZATION NAME: ARISE (AA Cole, MHE, CSMS, PVM)

Our school-based clinicians provide prevention and treatment to children and families who are experiencing emotional distress. Goals may include reducing truancy and behavioral problems by working with partners throughout the child's system of care, including school counselors and health care providers.

Family Services related to Substance Abuse

ORGANIZATION NAME: Farnham Family Services (PVM, CSMS)

Students are recommended into this school-based prevention program to help reduce risk factors related to substance abuse and related issues.

Preventive Services

ORGANIZATION NAME: Liberty Resources (PVM, CSMS, A.A. Cole, Brewerton, HME, MHE)

Students at risk are referred into this program through the Oswego County Department of Social Services. They offer casework services to assist families in identifying issues that place children at risk and develop goals to address those concerns. They provide both home-based and school-based counseling services, crisis intervention, advocacy and referral to other support services in the community.

Pregnancy Prevention Services/ Teen Health Issues

ORGANIZATION NAME: Citi BOCES APPS (PVM)

This service includes 1:1 or small group health education/ counseling, confidential pregnancy testing, transportation (with parent permission), and enhanced information and referrals.