

NEWSLETTER

Grand Rapids Public Schools School Social Work Wellness Team

Mission Statement

To promote mental, emotional, and physical health by providing fun facts and educational information on health, engaging in stress-relieving activities, and providing outlets for our colleagues, to experience support to each other to strengthen our capacity to help our colleagues, students, and families.

Team Goal 2020-2021

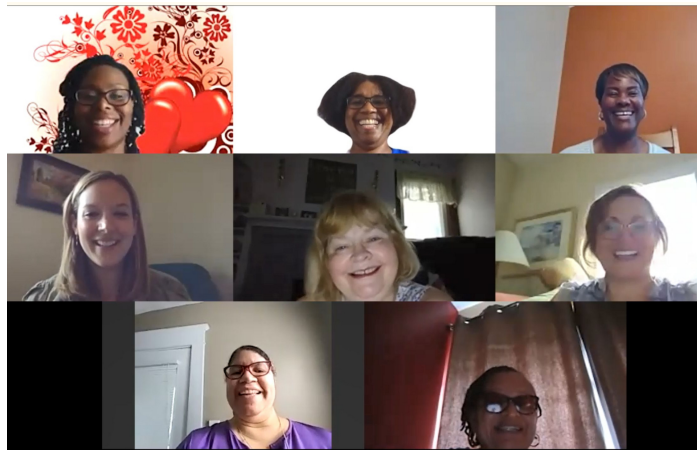
Our goal for 2020-2021 is to focus on mental, emotional, and physical self-care; by sharing information on how to recognize and respond to grief and trauma and to communicate the language of healing to ourselves, colleagues, students, and families that are in our care. By September 30, 2020, a GRPS School Social Workers Wellness newsletter will be shared with every building administrator in our district.

Objectives

- Mental Wellness
- Emotional Wellness
- Physical Wellness

Meet the Wellness Team!

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The Significant Impact of Trauma

- ◆ Keep in mind that many students, parents and colleagues may have experienced adverse childhood experiences and trauma over the course of this pandemic / over the course of their lives due to systemic racism and other factors.
- ◆ “Children exposed to chronic violence, abuse, neglect and trauma are developmentally about half of their chronological age” (Sorrels, p. 24)
- ◆ A child with a background of trauma can look similar to an individual with sensory processing disorder, ADHD, ODD, social skills difficulties
- ◆ “Social support is the most powerful protection against becoming overwhelmed by stress and trauma” (Van Der Kolk, p. 81)
- ◆ Remember that trauma can have long term effects - consider your own background and/or the backgrounds of colleagues.

Sources: Sorrels, B. 2015. *Reaching and teaching children exposed to trauma*. Lewisville, NC: Gryphon House.
Van der Kolk, B. A. 2014. *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. New York: Viking

Trauma-Informed Care Strategies/Techniques

Discuss and explore feelings often:

- ◆ Morning circles; practice identifying feelings; journaling, therapy

Practice Mindfulness:

- ◆ Class Dojo Videos, My Life app for teens/adults, Breathe Kids app for kids

Allow Movement/Sensory Breaks:

- ◆ Cosmic Kids Yoga, Go Noodle, breaks during your own workday

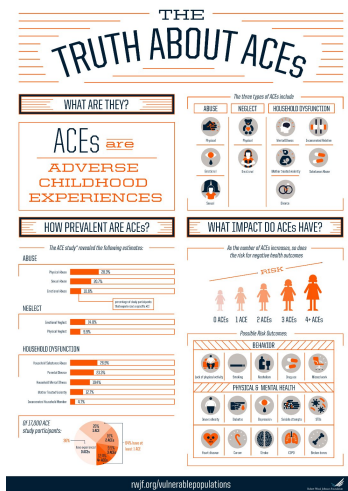
Use diverse books and lessons

- ◆ Teaching Tolerance - diversity, equity and justice lessons and resources for teachers

Take care of yourself - boundaries, self care

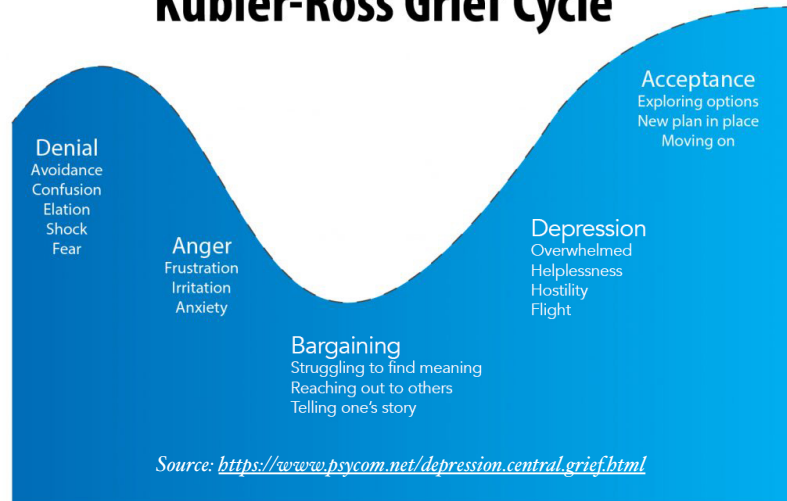
Trauma-Informed Resources

- ◆ Starr Commonwealth: <https://starr.org/programs/national-institute-for-trauma-and-loss-in-children-tlc/>
- ◆ Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL): https://casel.org/sp_faq/mental-health-trauma-and-well-being/



All About Grief

Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle



Information and Communication

Emotional Support

Guidance and Direction

Grief and Loss Resources

- ◆ Ele's Place: <http://www.elsplace.org>
- ◆ Gilda's Club Grand Rapids: <http://www.gildasclubgr.org>
- ◆ Hospice of Michigan-Grief Support: <http://www.home.org>

Tips for Talking to Those who are Grieving

Avoid saying this	Say this instead
"At least he's no longer in pain." This may minimize their experience. Avoid trying to "cheer up" those who are grieving.	"What have you been thinking about since your father died?"
"I lost both my parents when I was your age." Comparison statements may make the person feel their loss is not profound. Focus on the grieving person.	"Tell me more about what this has been like for you."
"You must be incredibly angry." It is not helpful to tell people how they're feeling. It is better to ask.	"Most people have strong feelings when something like this happens to them. What has this been like for you?"

Source: www.grievingstudent.com

Healing Talking Points - Building Resilience

Ask Yourself:

1. What past pain has been triggered for me right now?
2. Do I need a break?
3. What is this experience needing me to do or say?

Steps You Can Take to Heal:

1. Dispute overly negative thoughts!
2. Write, don't worry!
3. "It is what it is"

"Nothing ever goes away until it has taught us what we need to know"
 -Pema Chodron



Physical Wellness Tips

- ✦ Engage in physical activity every day for at least 30 minutes
- ✦ Use stairs instead of an elevator and walk whenever possible
- ✦ Learn to recognize warning signs when your body begins to feel ill
- ✦ Eat a variety of healthy foods and control your meal portions
- ✦ Sleep 7-9 hours per night

Mindfulness Exercise

"5,4,3,2,1 Grounding Exercise"

- ✦ Begin with a deep breath
- ✦ LOOK for 5 things around you
- ✦ FEEL 4 things near you
- ✦ LISTEN for 3 different sounds
- ✦ SMELL say 2 scents in the room
- ✦ TASTE say 1 thing you can taste

Additional Websites and Resources

- ✦ <https://psychcentral.com/blog/1-minute-mindfulness-exercises/>
- ✦ <https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities/>
- ✦ <https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/>
- ✦ www.Clevelandclinicwellness.com
- ✦ <https://www.psycom.net/depression.central.grief.html>
- ✦ <https://copingskillsforkids.com/blog/2016/4/27/coping-skill->

Quarterly Wellness Challenges!

Mindfulness Challenge (Oct.-Dec. 2020)

- ✦ Write down 5 things you are grateful for
- ✦ Spend some time outside
- ✦ Tell someone you love them, but really mean it!
- ✦ Unfollow people on social media that do not make you feel good
- ✦ Declutter your house or office
- ✦ Make a list of things you love about yourself

Sleep Challenge and Toolbox (Jan.-March 2021)

- ✦ Set the mood for sleep time
- ✦ Read or listen to a book
- ✦ Mentally prepare for tomorrow
- ✦ Stretch, meditate, and/or deep breathing
- ✦ Aromatherapy
- ✦ Take a warm bath or shower

Water Challenge, Drink up! (April-June 2021)

- ✦ Slows aging skin, moisturizes, and renews cells
- ✦ Drinking 16oz of water in the morning can boost metabolism
- ✦ Facilitates signaling pathway and nutrients delivery to the brain
- ✦ Removes toxins and inflammatory markers
- ✦ Provides energy sources for brain

Be S.M.A.R.T. About Your Health Goals!

Set yourself up for success by developing goals that focus on the journey, not the destination!

- S**pecific: Consider a specific action item instead of a vague objective.
- M**easurable: Track your progress in a journal or calendar.
- A**ttainable: Start with something you know you can do.
- R**elevant: Align your goals with your interests and values
- T**ime-specific: Set your goals with defined checkpoints.