

# Hunterdon Preparatory School

## Counseling Newsletter

Issue 2: March 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As the weather gets nicer and the days become longer, there is a feeling of renewed hope, optimism, and excitement. You may start to see a shift in your child's motivation with the change in season. Now would be a great time to cultivate new opportunities for your child and encourage them to take advantage of being outside. There are significant mental health benefits that can be gained from the outdoors. In addition, any activity inside or outside can be an opportunity to connect with your child. Encourage them to join you on a picnic, walk through a park, bike ride down a street or sit with you outside. Spending a mere 10 minutes in the sun not only improves mental health, but can also foster a social connection between you and your child.

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### What's Happening in the Community

We are halfway through the third marking period. Parents can access student Progress Reports on our Parent Portal. (Please reach out to Principal Schumann for any questions regarding access to the portal at [cschumann@hunterdonprep.org](mailto:cschumann@hunterdonprep.org)).

This is a great time for our students to reflect on the work they have completed thus far and begin to set goals for the remainder of the marking period and beyond. You can encourage your child to advocate for any assistance they need from HPS staff to meet their goals. This can be a wonderful opportunity for your child to partner with their teacher in their education. Our counselors are able to meet with your child individually to help with this process. We believe that learning how to communicate directly and appropriately is an important and necessary life skill.

Did you know that students who make the Honor Roll are treated to an Honor Roll Lunch? It is one of the many ways we celebrate achievement at our school.

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### Counselor Corner

**Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)** is a type of cognitive behavioral therapy that has been very successful with our students. One of the goals of DBT is to help a person identify and then challenge and change negative thinking patterns into more positive behaviors. *Although HPS does not use or subscribe to one specific type of therapy, a lot of our students who receive outside-of-school counseling have been introduced to DBT by their therapist or psychiatrist.* You may also be familiar with this approach as well. There are four modules to DBT therapy: **Mindfulness**, Interpersonal Effectiveness, Distress Tolerance, and Emotion Regulation. We are

going to highlight one aspect of DBT in this newsletter: Mindfulness.

**Mindfulness** is a state of nonjudgmental awareness of what's happening in the present moment. This includes a goal of becoming aware of one's own thoughts, feelings, and senses. It is important to practice mindfulness on a regular basis, as it takes time to develop this as a discipline in one's life. Mindfulness can help to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, can improve one's ability to manage emotions, can help to reduce ruminating thoughts, can improve memory/focus/mental processing speed, can improve relationships and can improve one's ability to adapt to stressful situations.

**Jon Kabat-Zinn** is a renowned mindfulness practitioner and scholar who has pioneered stress reduction strategies that have been adopted in a variety of clinical and professional settings. He has also written a number of books with the goal of helping readers to facilitate mindfulness practices and perspectives within the busy realm of our daily lives. In particular, *Wherever You*

*Go, There You Are* provides accessible and engaging meditations on cultivating a meaningful life. Check out some of his titles here:

<https://www.mindfulnesscds.com/pages/books-by-jon-kabat-zinn>

## Parent Resources

The infographic is divided into four quadrants, each with a title and instructions for a mindfulness practice. The top-left quadrant is titled 'FIND CALM IN THE STORM WITH 4-7-8 BREATHING' and includes a diagram of a person breathing and a list of steps: 4 INHALE for a slow count of 4, 7 HOLD that breath for 7 counts, and 8 EXHALE for a slow count of 8. The top-right quadrant is titled '5 Senses Mindful Moment' and lists five senses with corresponding icons: 5 things you can see (eye), 4 things you can hear (ear), 3 things you can smell (nose), 2 things you can feel (hand), and 1 thing you can taste (tongue). The bottom-left quadrant is titled 'Body Scan' and lists five steps: 1. Get comfortable, 2. Bring awareness to your feet, 3. Notice any intense sensations or discomfort, 4. Breathe into the tension and allow it to dissipate, and 5. Continue scanning until you reach your head. The bottom-right quadrant is titled 'Self-Compassion Mantra' and includes a speech bubble with the text 'This is hard. I'm doing my best. I'm a good parent.' and a diagram of a hand holding a heart. The infographic also includes the Wild Peace logo and website information at the bottom.

<https://www.wildpeace.org/>

## Articles

Best Ways to Motivate Your Teenager to do Better in School

<https://soflotutors.com/blog/best-ways-to-motivate-your-teenager-to-do-better-in-school/>

Tips and Strategies to Help Motivate an Unmotivated Kid

<https://www.parentmap.com/article/tips-and-strategies-help-motivate-unmotivated-kid>

The Benefits of Mindfulness

<https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-article/benefits-of-mindfulness/anxiety/adolescents>

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