

COUNSELING SUPPORT DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES

Dear Students and Families,

This is the first of a weekly newsletter that your School Counselors and School Social Workers will be sending to offer additional support and resources. With the closing of schools, we've put our heads together to come up with strategies to best support the needs of our students and their families remotely. As you know, a large part of our job is meeting face-to-face with students. Although we cannot meet with students in person during this time, we want all of our families to know that we are still available. If your child would like to email or talk via phone, we will be reachable during regular school hours. Just send an email to your School Social Worker/School Counselor and she will set up a time to check in. When you email, please let us know which method you'd prefer for our response. If it is via phone, it would be helpful if you provided the best phone number for you and/or your son/daughter to be reached. When we do call, please be thinking about a place to talk without distractions. If your household is as busy as many of ours, a white noise machine or light music in the background may help minimize distractions. Headphones might also be helpful. It would be beneficial for younger children to have a parent/guardian next to them to help facilitate the initial conversation as we know that this will be an adjustment. If you, as parents, decide for us to continue to support our students during this stressful time, we will troubleshoot together! We will continue to do our very best to provide you and your children with as much support and resources as we can.

Also, just as when we were seeing your children in person at school, there are limits to confidentiality. Any information disclosed through an email or telephone conversation is generally confidential, with the following exceptions:

- Mandatory reporting of abuse
- Any threats of violence made towards a reasonably identifiable person
- If a student is in such a mental or emotional condition to be a danger to themselves or others

For safety, we ask that:

- Parents agree to be available for the duration of the time we are working with your child(ren) and are able to join the conversation at any time if necessary.
- Parents agree to have their designated phone on hand during the scheduled time and have the ability to answer any calls.
- An address of where the student is during our conversation will be given at the start of each conversation so that in case of an emergency situation, your school counselor will be able to use the given address to contact 911.

We know that this will look different than what our students are used to, however we are hopeful that we can continue to provide meaningful support to our students and their families. We can't wait to hear our students' voices and to get an update how everyone is doing. We miss each and every one of you.

If you have any questions or if we can help in any way, please let us know.

Sincerely,
Your School Social Workers and School Counselors
School Social Work Program
Catholic Charities Indianapolis

WEEKLY TIP FOR PARENTS:

Parents: What we are being asked to do is not humanly possible. There is a reason we are either a working parent, a stay-at-home parent or a part-time working parent.

Working, parenting and teaching are three different jobs that cannot be done at the same time.

It's not hard because you are doing it wrong. It's hard because it's too much. Do the best you can.

When you have to pick, because at some point you will, choose connection. Pick playing a game over arguing about an academic assignment. Pick teaching your child to do laundry rather than feeling frustrated that they aren't helping. Pick laughing, snuggling, and reminding them that they are safe.

If you are stressed, lower your expectations where you can and virtually reach out for social connection. We are in this together to stay well. That means mentally well, too.

Adapted from Emily W. King, Ph.D.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Community Compass is a free, quick and easy app designed to show people where they can find food assistance in Marion County. With a smart phone, you can find free meal locations and free grocery locations near you. If you do not have a smart phone, you can text the word "hi" to 317-434-3758.

Indianapolis Public Schools webpage offers up-to-date information on local food and other community resources

<https://myips.org/blog/district/community-partners-continue-to-provide-resources-to-families-los-socios-comunitarios-continuan-brindando-recursos-a-las-familias/>

The City of Indianapolis website has a list of community resources and supports aimed at helping those that are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.indy.gov/topic/covid>

2-1-1 is a free and confidential service that helps Hoosiers across Indiana find the local resources they need. Dial 2-1-1 for 24-hours a day, 7 days a week support.

Catholic Charities Crisis Office 317-236-1512

St. Vincent de Paul Help Line 317-687-0169

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES:

National Crisis Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

Crisis line via online chat at: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/> or by text: Send the word HOME to 741741

Community Health Network: 317-621-5700

Provides immediate assessments by phone for persons experiencing a mental health crisis 24 hours daily and offers referrals and scheduling for mental health and addiction treatment providers.

Sandra Eskenazi Mental Health Center: 317-880-8485

Provides 24-hour telephone crisis interventions for persons with mental health or addiction treatment emergencies.

Aspire Indiana Crisis Line: 1-800-560-4038

Provides 24 hour phone crisis interventions for persons experiencing a mental health or addictions crisis.

Adult and Child Mental Health Center: 1-877-882-5122

Provides a 24-hour crisis and referral phone line.

Families First: 317-251-7575

24-hour crisis and suicide intervention services by both phone and text messaging.

Indiana Coalition against Domestic Violence: 1-800-332-7385

Offers 24-hour crisis intervention, safety planning and shelter referrals for persons in domestic violence situations.

HAPPY, HEALTHY KIDS AT HOME:

Julia Cook is nationally recognized as an award-winning children's book author and parenting expert has written a book, called "The Yucky Bug" that can be shared with children to help explain the COVID-19 pandemic. She also has provided tips for parents on talking to kids about "The Yucky Bug."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZD9KNhmOCV4>

<https://www.juliacookonline.com/assets/uploads/2020/03/Yucky-Bug.pdf>