



School Counseling Team

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Elementary School Counseling Newsletter

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS SPECIAL EDITION

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, social and spiritual well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices (World Health Organization, Fact sheet No. 220). Mental health impacts our relationships in and outside our family unit. Unfortunately, the words "MENTAL HEALTH" still carry a stigma that is refraining children, teenagers and adults from seeking help for fear of judgement or rejection. The consequences of this fear can be devastating. As with any health related condition, early intervention is of vital importance.

Throughout his long pontificate (1978-2005), Saint Pope John Paul II recognized the existence of a universal mental health crisis and, as the Head of the Church, he advocated for those suffering from such conditions reminding us where the Church stands about the dignity of the human person as children of God. *"...whoever suffers from mental illness always bears God's image and likeness in himself, as does every human being. In addition, he always has the inalienable right not only to be considered as an Image of God and therefore as a person, but also to be treated as such...It is everyone's duty to make an active response: our actions must show that mental illness does not create insurmountable distances, nor prevent relations of true Christian charity with those who are its victims. Indeed, it should inspire a particularly attentive attitude towards these people who are fully entitled to belong to the category of the poor to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs (cf. Mt 5:3)." (St. Pope John Paul II; MENTALLY ILL ARE ALSO MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE; 11 December 1996 ; Article, L'Osservatore Romano; EWTN library)*

"The spread of depressive states has become disturbing. They reveal human, psychological and spiritual frailties which, at least in part, are induced by society. It is important to become aware of the effect on people of messages conveyed by the media which exalt consumerism, the immediate satisfaction of desires and the race for ever greater material well-being." (St. Pope John Paul II; ADDRESS 18th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PROMOTED BY THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR HEALTH PASTORAL CARE ON THE THEME OF "DEPRESSION" Nov. 2003).

"Weird", "mental", "awkward", "annoying", are only some of the words that are frequently used to refer to peers whose demeanor and/or behavior is not typical. As parents and educators, we have a responsibility to educate ourselves for the benefit of the children we love and teach. Let us help them understand that everyone's brain is wired differently and that it is not their fault. They are still kids with feelings, dreams, that long to be part of the group. Let us learn to accept the differences and view them as an opportunity that God is giving us to exercise our virtues.

Your school counselors are certified in Youth Mental Health First Aid. If you have any questions or concerns about your child, we are here for you to help you walk through the process of identifying the concerns and refer you to the appropriate specialist that can evaluate and determine how to best meet your child's needs. This process is strictly confidential.

Please, do not hesitate to contact the school counselors should you need any assistance. Blessings, *Elsa*



Find Local Catholic Mental Health Providers

- ◆ CC Diocese of Arlington Counseling:
<https://www.cdda.net/need-help/medical-and-counseling/counseling/>
- ◆ IPS Center for Psychological Services <https://ipscenter.org/>
- ◆ Alpha Omega Clinic <https://aoclinic.org/>
- ◆ Catholic Therapists Search: <https://www.catholictherapists.com/>

~CATHOLIC RESOURCES~

- ◆ Bishop Burbidge message on Mental Health (2023):
<https://www.cdda.net/need-help/medical-and-counseling/counseling/>
- ◆ Catholic Mental Health Videos (various topics)
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwz9H-zVK86TIYQzNq03x01R_MGuHyOAT

~INFORMATION~

- ◆ Learn the signs and Act Early
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>
- ◆ Anxiety and Depression Assoc. of America
<https://adaa.org/>
- ◆ Mental Health Facts
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response?scrybrkr>
- ◆ Children's Mental Health
<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>