



Counselor's Corner

January/February 2022

A Mindful New Year!

As we all prepare for the upcoming new year, we should not allow the opportunity to reflect upon this previous year pass us by. 2021 has been a unique year to say the least, however the struggles and challenges that presented themselves throughout are valuable life lessons that shouldn't be overlooked. Maintaining a positive mindset and outlook during this time of reflection and transition is important, and mindfulness can be a useful tool to help do so. We have the ability to practice mindfulness anytime and anywhere to help stay connected, calm and manage any obstacles that may arise.

What is Mindfulness? Mindfulness is focusing on the present moment and taking time to become aware of what is going on around us. Research outlined by the American Psychological Association has defined mindfulness as, "a moment-to-moment awareness of one's experience without judgment". It is an evidence-based practice of bringing attention to one's thoughts and feelings. When we incorporate mindfulness into our daily routines, it can help reduce stress, regulate emotions, improve sleep habits and our overall ability to focus and concentrate.

There are many easy ways to practice mindfulness each and every day. Sometimes all it takes is a mindful minute in the day! Here are some suggested mindfulness practices for children and families in preparation for the upcoming year.

Spread Kindness. Another key component to mindfulness is the importance of spreading kindness to ourselves and others. A simple kindness mindfulness practice is sending kind thoughts or wishes to a specific person. To begin, close your eyes and think of someone who you would like to share your kind thoughts with (it can be yourself, too!). Then, make a kind wish to them by asking the question, "what would make myself or them happy?". Notice how it feels to practice this compassionate mindfulness exercise.

Set a Daily Intention. Daily intentions are a beneficial and positive way to begin each day. To start, decide on a time that works with your morning routine. Then, find a comfortable spot, take a deep breath and set one specific attainable goal for the day. Questions that can help foster a daily intention are as follows:

1. What would make you proud today?
2. How will you be your best self?
3. How do you want to express gratitude for today?

To further expand on this practice, journal or draw your intention and at the end of the day reflect upon how it was put into action!

Take a Mindful Breath. Incorporate these fun and easy child-friendly breathing strategies into your daily practice!

Birthday Candle Breathing  : Spread your hand out in front of you and pretend each finger is a candle. Inhale a deep breath and with each slow exhale blow out the "birthday candle" by lowering each finger down.

Bumble Bee Breathing  : Take a deep inhale through your nose and with each slow exhale hum or buzz like a bumble bee.

Bubble Breathing  : For this mindfulness practice you will need a bottle of bubbles. Take a slow, deep inhale and as you exhale slowly and calmly blow the bubbles on the wand.

**Adapted from mindful.org, apa.org, actionforhealthykids.org and The New York Times*

For further details or information, please contact your child's guidance counselor:

Mrs. Kelly B. Maire

Angelo L. Tomaso School
(908) 753-5300 x 5305
kblessing-maire@warrentboe.org

Ms. Alyssa Pech

Central School
(908) 753-5300 x 5205
apech@warrentboe.org

Dr. Kelly Stankiewicz

Mount Horeb School
(908) 753-5300 x 5405
kellystankiewicz@warrentboe.org

Ms. Alexandra Pranzo

Woodland School
(908) 753-5300 x 5505
apranzo@warrentboe.org

Ms. Lauren Systo

Middle School - 6th grade
(908) 753-5300 x5009
lregal@warrentboe.org

Ms. Helen Scully

Middle School- 7th grade
(908) 753-5300 x 5007
hscully@warrentboe.org

Mrs. Midge Johnson

Middle School – 8th grade
(908) 753-5300 x 5005
mjohanson@warrentboe.org

Mrs. Carol Brown

Warren Middle School
908-753-5300 x 5101
cbrown@warrentboe.org