

SDUHSD MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELING NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2018

SDUHSD middle and high school counselors are committed to working in partnership with parents/guardians in supporting student social and emotional well-being. Recognizing that middle school is a time of significant change, middle school counselors will be using this bi-monthly newsletter as a forum to share information about essential topics using a Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) framework that focuses on five key areas: relationship skills, responsible decision-making, self-management, self-awareness, and social awareness. Social and emotional well-being sets the groundwork for a safe and positive learning environment and enhances a student's ability to lead a well-balanced life.

Middle School Matters!

Middle school can be a confusing time, for parents as well as their kids. Your child is becoming more independent, yet still needs your support. As your child's independence increases, it is important to stay involved by lending support and guidance at home. One area we want to pay particular attention to is how your teen views their intelligence and abilities. How they see themselves in these two areas is shown to have an impact on not only how they adjust academically to middle school but also how they adapt emotionally. In the American Psychological Association's article, "[Middle School Malaise](#)," psychologists note that students who adapt positively to middle school are those that believe their intelligence and abilities can change over time; by trying new things, experiencing failure, learning from mistakes, and knowing learning takes patience, effort and time (a GROWTH Mindset). When students view their intelligence as fixed they believe there is no room for improvement, and experience feeling discouraged, wanting to give up or are afraid to make mistakes. By being attentive to how they view their intelligence and abilities, we can step in when needed to help our teen become skilled in positively reframing how they see themselves.

Fixed Mindset

I'm either good at it or not

When I'm frustrated I give up

When I fail or make a mistake I'm no good

Growth Mindset

I can learn anything I want to

When I'm frustrated I persevere

When I fail or make a mistake I learn

Tips to Help Build a Growth Mindset

Recognize your mindset

*He/she'll get it.
He/she's working on it and making progress.*

This acknowledges that your child is able to succeed with effort and at their own pace

Praise the process that led to success

"I know it was hard, but look how your effort paid off."

This lets your teen know that their effort led to success

Model learning from mistakes

"_____ isn't the right answer. You don't fully understand it YET."

"YET is a powerful word and indicates that success will occur if they keep working

Talking with your teen!

It can be challenging to talk with your teen, especially after a tiring day. Here are some *light-hearted* questions to ask them to help you find out about their day at school!

What was your favorite part of lunch today?

Tell me something that made you laugh today.

If I called your teacher, what would he/she say about you?

If you could choose, who would you like to sit by in class?

What was your favorite class today?

What was your most challenging assignment today?

Did you do a fun/interesting activity in class today?

How did you help someone today or how did someone help you?

Did you go to any student clubs at lunch today?

When were you the happiest today?

Social Media Highlight

Social media access and use is at the forefront of parent concern in the middle school years and we want to provide up-to-date resources and guidance for parents as it relates to their teens privacy and safety. SDUHSD middle schools reference and utilize digital citizenship lesson plans from Common Sense Media. [Common Sense Media](#) is a site we also recommend to assist parents in learning about the latest apps and websites, along with tips of how to talk with their teen about how to responsibly use social media.

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Middle School Transitions

There are two types of transitions that need to be made when a student arrives at middle school- academic and social. It is not uncommon to see students having difficulty balancing homework, family life and outside activities as the new school year begins. Be sure that your student is organizing themselves for success. Agendas should be written in daily, backpacks should be cleaned out at least one time a week and homework should be done nightly. Don't accept the "I don't have homework" excuse you may hear. Students should have homework nightly. If your child is struggling with the academic transition, you may need to help them set up some type of organization system and monitor their homework closely. Be sure that they are breaking down long term projects into small parts and that they not procrastinating with their assignments. If they are finding the material difficult, encourage them to ask questions in class or during CAT. Be sure to talk with your student's counselor if your child is experiencing consistent academic difficulty.

The social transition to middle school can often be overwhelming for students. Not only do they have to adjust to a new school with new rules, they are experiencing new social expectations and pressures that perhaps they've never dealt with before. If your student needs help dealing with this, please encourage them to come to see their counselor as we have many ways in which to help. Encourage students to get involved with activities on campus, whether it's attending a dance, joining a club, or participating in lunchtime activities. These are great ways to meet new friends who share similar interests. Encourage self-advocacy by role playing conversations that your student might need to have with their teachers. Work with them on graceful ways of getting out of sticky social situations. Just saying no is great, but how to say it can be complicated.

Counselors are available to help with any type of assistance that you may need, so feel free to contact us.

♡, *Laura Martin and Rebecca Vincent*