



COUNSELING NEWS

April/May 2021

Special Edition

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

YOU WILL LEARN HOW TO COMBAT TEST ANXIETY

PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Read about 5 important brain foods to sustain your energy and focus during the test and the importance of getting enough sleep.

COMBATING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

You will learn how to combat negative thoughts and self-criticism with a growth mindset and calming grounding techniques.

THE POWER OF POSITIVITY

Staying positive helps strengthen our mood, actions and our health. Find out how to stay more positive, even during stressful situations.

YOU WILL ALSO LEARN THE WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE REMEMBER: SEE SOMETHING/SAY SOMETHING

Mrs. Dobson
6th Grade Counselor

ljdobson@
dadeschools.net

Mrs. Carey-Gore
8th Grade Counselor
Student Services
Chairperson

rcarey@dadeschools.net

Ms. Perlman
7th Grade and Trust
Counselor

SCurtiellas@
dadeschools.net

MS. WEAVER

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR
TWEAVER@CHISOUTHFL.ORG

-911 for emergency
assistance

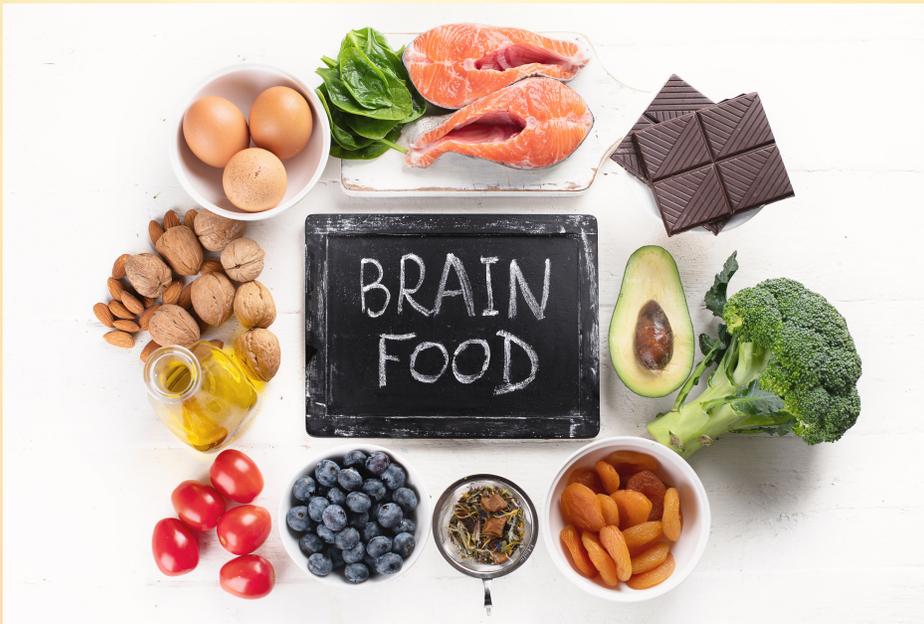
-Parent Assistance Line
(mental health concerns)
(305)995-7100

-National Suicide Prevention
Lifeline 1-800-273-8255
<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

MRS. MARTINEZ

MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATOR

LMARTINEZ023@
DADESCHOOLS.NET



Students can have trouble concentrating on an empty stomach, and junk food can cause sugar spikes followed by sharp crashes. **Research shows** that eating a healthy diet improves students' focus, mental capacity, and exam performance.

1. Encourage students to maintain a healthy diet and study on a full stomach to improve retention.
2. When possible, administer tests after meal times — e.g. first thing in the morning or after lunch period.
3. Bring in a healthy snack for your students to eat right before they start the exam.

5 EXCELLENT BRAIN FOOD CHOICES

Proper diet is very important for students like you who are facing important exams:

1. **Fish** for Omega 3s
2. **Dark fruits and veggies** for antioxidants

Foods especially high in antioxidants include:

- Berries, especially blueberries
- Red beans, pinto beans, and black beans
- Artichokes
- Prunes
- Apples
- Pecans

3. **Complex carbohydrates** for sustained energy

Some great sources of complex carbohydrates include:

- Whole grains — steel cut oatmeal is a great pre-test breakfast option
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Beans and other legumes

4. **Quality protein** for sustained energy. This includes lean meats, eggs, soy foods and milk.

5. **Water.** Hydration is important to brain function and mental focus.



Sufficient Sleep



According to the **National Sleep Foundation**, elementary students need 11 – 13 hours of sleep, and older students need 10 – 11 hours. Getting enough rest is important not just for our overall health, but it can also improve our ability to focus, learn, and retain facts.

Sleep. Getting enough sleep will support your ability to concentrate and focus, as well as your ability to remain alert throughout the day/during your learning/study sessions. It's also the time when information is transferring from the hippocampus to the neocortex, from short-term to long-term memory. If you're not getting the sleep you need as you study and prepare for your tests, you won't be allowing your brain to engage in that important memory transfer process.

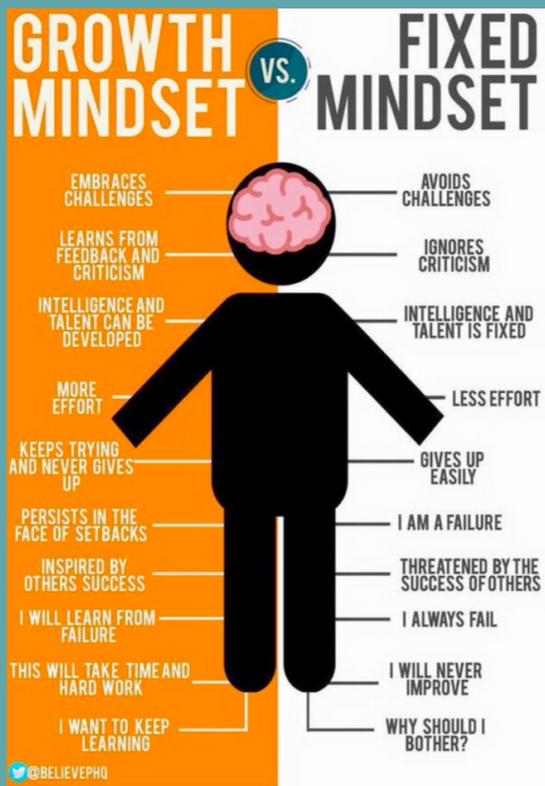


Growth Mindset

Stress and anxiety can often cause students to experience negative thoughts and self-criticism. Promoting a growth mindset can help students overcome these feelings. It's important for students to understand that a test is a snapshot in time, and improvements can be made to improve performance in the future.

CHANGE YOUR WORDS,
CHANGE YOUR
MINDSET ↻

INSTEAD OF SAYING THAT	SAY THIS!
IT'S TOO HARD.	I'LL KEEP TRYING.
I CAN'T DO THAT.	HOW CAN I GET BETTER AT THAT?
I GIVE UP.	I WILL KEEP WORKING!
I'M AFRAID I'LL MAKE A MISTAKE.	MISTAKES ARE HOW WE LEARN BEST.
THEY'RE SMARTER THAN ME.	WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THEM?
THIS IS HARD.	THIS MAY TAKE SOME TIME AND EFFORT.
I'M A FAILURE.	I CAN LEARN FROM MY MISTAKES.
I DON'T GET IT.	WHAT AM I MISSING?
I HATE TO BE WRONG.	IS THIS REALLY MY BEST WORK?
I DON'T LIKE OTHERS TO DO BETTER THAN ME.	I'M GOING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THEY DO AND TRY IT!



BREATHE



GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

Another way to cope with your feelings and reduce your stress and anxiety is to practice **grounding** techniques. Grounding helps keep someone in the present moment. Try the following grounding techniques when you are feeling anxious and/or need a distraction:

1. 5-4-3-2-1 MINDFULNESS

- **Name 5 things you can see in the room with you.** You can change this to 5 blue things you see, 5 things you see that are round, etc.
- **Name 4 things you can feel** (i.e. hands on table or feet on floor)
- **Name 3 things you can hear** (i.e. tv, the air conditioner or people talking)
- **Name 2 things you can smell** or 2 things you like the smell of.
- **Name one thing you can taste** or that you like the taste of.

2. WHAT DO I SEE?

Another grounding technique is to think of items you see or that are in your house and list them from A-Z. See how far you can get in the alphabet and then check-in with yourself and see how you're feeling.

3. CALMING COUNT DOWN

1. Find a comfortable place to sit. Close your eyes and take 5 long deep breaths silently repeating "relax."
2. Take 10 slow deep breaths counting down from 10 with each exhale. Imagine all the stress leaving your mind and body as you count down.
3. As you reach "one" bring your awareness back to your surroundings. Check-in with yourself and see how you're feeling.

Repeat these techniques as often as needed throughout the day.

Relaxation Techniques

Calming exercises such as yoga, meditation, and deep breathing can be an effective way to reduce test anxiety and settle students' nerves. Students can benefit from practicing these techniques on a regular basis, beyond exam day.





THE POWER OF POSITIVITY

It's likely our species survived because of our knack for detecting danger. But our worry-filled thoughts can present dangers of their own: Thinking negatively can drag down our moods, our actions and even our health. Experts say it's worthwhile—and possible—to learn how to think more positively.

Ways to Stay Positive:

1. Foster optimism

Trying to be optimistic doesn't mean ignoring the uglier sides of life. It just means focusing on the positive as much as possible—and it gets easier with practice.

2. Practice gratitude

Noticing and appreciating the positives in our lives offers a great mood boost.

3. Avoid negative thinking

If you want to feel positive, it pays to decrease the downers in your life. With practice, you can resist worrisome thoughts and perhaps even transform your internal critic into more of a cheering squad.

For more information on the topic please visit Mental Health America at: <https://mhanational.org>

HONESTY

"When you are honest, you speak the truth. More broadly, you present yourself in a genuine and sincere way, without pretense, and taking responsibility for your feelings and actions".

*Values Matter
in April:*

Honesty

KNOW THE SIGNS

Suicide Is Preventable

1. **RECOGNIZE**  **WARNING SIGNS AND THREATS**
2. **ACT IMMEDIATELY** take it SERIOUSLY.
3. **say something** to a **TRUSTED ADULT**

know the

SUICIDE

WARNING

SIGNS

1. talking about suicide
any talk of death, self-harm, or wishing they never were born

2. seeking lethal means
looking for access to guns, pills, knives or other objects that could be used for a suicide attempt

3. no hope for the future
expressing helplessness and hopelessness, feeling they are trapped and that things will never change

4. self loathing & self hatred
feelings of guilt, shame, and being a burden to others

5. getting affairs in order
making a will, giving away possessions

6. saying goodbye
unexpected visits, saying goodbye as if they won't see you again

7. withdraw from others
increasing social isolation and a desire to be left alone

8. self destructive behavior
increased drug & alcohol use, reckless driving, taking unnecessary risks



NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
LIFELINE
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS: PLEASE SEE YOUR GRADE LEVEL COUNSELOR.