

BRISTOL EASTERN HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR COMMENTS

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MONTHLY TIP: FEELING OVERWHELMED AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

Stress and feeling overwhelmed have become common place in today's society. Too many times we are asked to pull ourselves in different directions; whether you are a parent dropping everything to drive your kids around or a student juggling academics, sports, extracurricular activities, and a social life. Sometimes we also get so caught up in making this raised level of stress our daily life, that we don't even realize that we are overwhelmed. Below are some different ways that stress reveals itself as noted from WebMd.

Emotional symptoms of stress include:

- Becoming easily agitated, frustrated, and moody
- Feeling overwhelmed, like you are losing control or need to take control
- Having difficulty relaxing and quieting your mind
- Feeling bad about yourself (low self-esteem), lonely, worthless, and depressed
- Avoiding others

Physical symptoms of stress include:

- Low energy
- Headaches
- Upset stomach, including diarrhea, constipation, and nausea
- Chest pain and rapid heartbeat
- Insomnia
- Clenched jaw and grinding teeth
- Often sick or weakened immune system

Cognitive symptoms of stress include:

- Constant worrying
- Racing thoughts
- Forgetfulness and disorganization
- Inability to focus
- Poor judgment
- Being pessimistic or seeing only the negative side

Behavioral symptoms of stress include:

- Changes in appetite -- either not eating or eating too much
- Procrastinating and avoiding responsibilities
- Exhibiting more nervous behaviors, such as nail biting, fidgeting, and pacing

I often find that it is harder to reduce stress than to create it, but here are some healthy alternatives to lower the level of stress in your life.

- **Take a step back and take a few deep breaths...really slow deep breaths.** This helps oxygen back into the brain and lowers the heart rate too.
- **Watch what you eat or drink.** Reaching for coffee or junk food may be satisfying in the moment, but it definitely doesn't help in the long run. Eating one ingredient foods helps to cut down on the processed food and give you the vitamins and nutrients your body needs to function properly.
- **Get more sleep.** Sleep restores the body and mind through the night. When we don't get enough sleep it's harder to wake up and function throughout our day. This may mean putting down anything with a screen an hour before you head to bed to help your brain start to shut off.
- **Play.** Many studies have shown that play, with absolutely no reason or purpose, is needed in our life. Without play we foster anxiety and depression, so take time for a family game night. TEDtalk has a video called *Play is more than just fun* that really helps bring this point home.
- **Exercise.** Adding exercise to your day...or even week has multiple benefits. First it releases endorphins into your body to help you feel better. Secondly it works through the muscles in the body to release tension, especially yoga or stretching. Finally, it gives you time in your day to do something for yourself, reflect, or create a blank space in your mind depending on the work out.
- **Listen to music.** Create a calm meditation radio station or something that picks your mood right up to be lighthearted on Pandora. Music has an ability to influence our moods and bring up thoughts of peace or joy.

What's coming up for...

...FRESHMEN

BEHS Freshmen	<p>TOPIC: <u>More on Study Skills - Stress-Free Studying</u> (Source: <i>Successful Study Skills 4 Students, LLC; Skills for School, Tools for Life</i>)</p> <p>DATE: <u>October 2015</u></p>
<i>Introduction</i>	<p><i>"I'm so stressed!" This is one of the key complaints we hear from students. Students are enrolled in five to seven courses per term and each teacher assigns homework, essays, and tests every day. We understand why students look at all of their assignments and want to scream. Taking control of stress goes a long way toward leading you to your goals. Here are some tips for stopping stress and getting yourself on track to a stress-free study time.</i></p>
<i>Get Organized</i>	<p><i>Use your planner and make a schedule. Keep your planner with you in class to write in your assignments and test dates. The best time to study a subject is directly following the class. You will find that keeping up with you studying will be helpful when you are doing assignments.</i></p>
<i>Manage Time Wisely</i>	<p><i>You have your planner and you've made a schedule. Now make sure that you schedule time for studying, not just the written assignments! Don't pretend to be studying when you are really grabbing some facebook time or snap-chatting. The assignment is not going to go away! Get it done so that you can reward yourself with some fun! Don't procrastinate!</i></p>

<i>Your Learning Style</i>	<i>Each of us has our own way of being and of learning. You are unique! Find and use your own learning style. For example, if you are a visual learner, you could write out certain points or draw diagrams to help you retain key points. Aural learners might like to read the text aloud, and kinesthetic learners might be able to try to do what the text is suggesting (act it out, role play it in front of the mirror, create a dance or a rap).</i>
<i>Breathe</i>	<i>Deep breathing exercises can be a great way to get rid of pent-up stress. One exercise you can do is to sit in a relaxed position, inhale deeply through your nose right into your belly, and then slowly exhale through your mouth. Repeat this a few times - slowly. Your brain will get the message to slow down and relax. <u>WebMD has some more great stress-busting breathing exercises.</u></i>
<i>Take a Power Nap . . .</i>	<i>. . . Just not in class. Long hours spent studying can tire you out. One way of alleviating the drowsy feeling is to take a short power nap. Just closing your eyes and drifting into an alpha sleep for 5-10 minutes will help you immensely.</i>
<i>Exercise</i>	<i>The fitter you are, the clearer your mind will be. Try to exercise regularly. Set aside time to walk, jog, dance, or take a bike ride. Just 15-30 minutes of exercise each day reduces stress and boosts your mind power. When you are feeling overwhelmed, try doing some jumping jacks or push-ups to relieve stress. Then get back to studying with a clear and stress free mind.</i>
<i>Clear Your Study Area</i>	<i>There is a difference between a clean and a well organized desk. Your study area should have the materials you need for studying - and that is all. Set it up so that you have all you need to study in one place. Anything that doesn't pertain to the task at hand will only distract you from you goal.</i>
<i>Watch Your Diet</i>	<i>Cookies and chips may taste good, but junk food zaps your mental energy. Likewise, skipping a meal won't help. Your body and your brain need to be fueled by healthy food to function at peak performance. Make sure you eat regularly and choose healthy snacks.</i>
<i>Summary</i>	<i>Stress is, unfortunately, a part of life. But there are many ways to relieve it. You can take steps to creating a stress-free study time. Stock up on healthy snacks, take a power nap when you need to, de-clutter your study area, and keep your planner nearby. When all else fails and you feel like pulling your hair out, stand up, stretch and breathe deeply until you are calmer. Then you will feel better able to get back to the task at hand.</i>

...SOPHOMORES

Now is a great time to start thinking about your future! What do you want to be when you grow up? This should still be a question you ask yourself today. The guidance department is planning a Manufacturing Field trip to learn about the different jobs and careers in the local area. This can include anything from in the factory to administrative assistant to payroll to management! So be sure to sign up for this Field Trip when you see it in the announcements.

...JUNIORS

We hope your first quarter is going well and you are thinking about your post secondary planning and doing some of the research we suggested in last month's newsletter. Some important things coming up:

- Juniors took the PSAT on October 14th. A major benefit to the PSAT is that it can assist you with college and career planning. The PSAT also helps students increase SAT scores through practice opportunities. As a Junior, you are also entered into the National Merit Scholarship Corporation competition. Go here for more info: www.nationalmerit.org. Your scores will be available for review in December.
- ECMC College night is coming on November 12th from 6-8. We will be getting you more information and need an RSVP for this event. This is a great night to learn about college planning and financial aid. Pizza and beverages will be provided. There will also be an opportunity to win a \$500.00 scholarship!
- Keep your eyes and ears open for announcements regarding the Tunxis High School Partnership Program. This is a great way to get started taking college level courses and earn FREE college credit. This program is open in the Fall and Spring semesters only to high school juniors and seniors who have an overall "B" average, are recommended by their guidance counselor, and have appropriate placement scores. Recommended students will be eligible to take one course per semester free of charge (General Fund tuition and fees). Students taking on campus classes will be responsible for their transportation to campus and book expenses. Students taking online classes will be responsible for their book expenses. Applications will be available in the guidance office. For more info on this program please visit www.tunxis.edu and search for high school programs.

...SENIORS

SENIOR SEMINARS:

The Guidance Department is holding seminars to help you with your post-secondary planning. Seminars will be held every period and after school on Tuesdays in the Guidance Conference Room. They will be announced through Remind text alerts, in Guidance and morning announcements. Students who are interested in attending can sign up in the Senior Seminar Binder in our office and take a pass.

WE HAVE VISITORS!!

Several colleges, vocational schools and military representatives are visiting us in Guidance waiting to speak to you about their programs! Please check the Guidance calendar on our website, the bulletin board outside our office or the College Visit Binder in Guidance for upcoming dates/times. Sign up in Guidance for a pass.

SEE YOUR COUNSELOR

regarding your post-secondary plans. This can be a stressful time of year and we are here to help!

UPCOMING SAT/ACTS

SAT ADMINISTRATION DATES

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Normal Deadline</u>	<u>Late Registration</u>	<u>Online Score Release</u>	<u>Location</u>
December 5, 2015	November 5, 2015	November 23, 2015	December 24, 2015	BC

To sign up for the SAT visit www.collegeboard.com

ACT ADMINISTRATION DATES

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Late Fee Required</u>
December 12, 2015	November 6, 2015	November 7-20, 2015

To sign up for the ACT visit www.actstudent.org

Fee waivers for both tests are available for families who qualify. Please see you counselor for more details.

Bristol Eastern will hold a **Financial Aid Night** for seniors and their parents in the auditorium on **Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2015**. While the program is especially timely for BE seniors and their folks, we encourage all interested students and parents to attend this program and learn more about the financial aid application process and how it works. It is never too early for any parent/guardian to learn more about paying for college!

Two articles that may be helpful.....

How Many Colleges Should I Apply To?

For most students, six is a pretty good number – two "reach" schools (where acceptance is far from certain), two "maybe" schools (good chance), and two "no problem schools" (absolutely no chance of being rejected). As with any school you apply to, you want to be sure that the match is good, whether the school is your first or last choice.

If you apply to more than six colleges, you'll be devoting a lot of time to completing applications, and we mean a lot – weeks and weeks of after school applications tailoring. Students are applying to more schools now than ever before. A lot of over-applying is a direct result of the fear students have that they will not be admitted to the school of their choice because of an ultra-competitive admissions scene. If this describes you, remember only a handful of highly selective colleges deny more applicants than they admit. For the vast majority of schools, the opposite is true.

Other students over-apply because they're afraid they won't be admitted for financial reasons as some colleges move toward "need-aware" admissions policies (If they're aware you have financial need, it may be harder for you to be admitted). These students apply to lots of schools, thereby maximizing their chance of being accepted to a college they can actually afford – a college that will not take their ability to pay into account when making an admissions decision. Having acceptance letters from multiple colleges can also enhance your bargaining position when negotiating aid (more on that later).

Whatever your concerns may be, if you approach the admissions process realistically and choose your colleges wisely, you have a great chance of being accepted somewhere you can afford and enjoy.

Seniors get lots of advice on how to improve their chances of getting accepted by the college of their choice. The simplest advice, of course, is to get the best grades you can in the best courses available. But I would add to that some other points, inspired by Williams Fitzsimmons, the Dean of Admission and Financial Aid at Harvard University.

Don't:

- Take easy courses just to get good grades.
- Spend hours on an activity unless you enjoy it.
- Choose a college simply to get ahead.
- Be afraid to take chances or make mistakes.

Do:

- Take time to set priorities for yourself.
- Seek opportunities to mix with others from different backgrounds.
- Take care to enjoy the present.
- Keep your sense of humor. You're going to need it.

Source: Time/The Princeton Review, College Edition

What's The Biggest Mistake Applicants Can Make On Their College Applications?

- **Not following the instructions on the application.** (Brown University)
- **Not indicating clearly what it is you want to study.** For NYU and colleges with specific undergraduate schools, you must indicate which program of study you intend to pursue (Richard Avitable, formally NYU).
- **Rushing.** Not paying attention to the look of your application is the equivalent of not being thoughtful of your reader's experience. This includes not using spell check on your computer. One essay to the University of Pennsylvania continually referred to The Wharton School of Bunnies (Dan Evans, University of Pennsylvania).
- **Reiterating in your essay everything you listed on your resume.** (Brown University)
- **Writing the same essay for ten colleges but forgetting to change the name.** (Adam Max at Emory University)

- **Burying genuinely outstanding accomplishments in a sea of more mundane activities.** (Marianne M. Kosiewicz, Associate Dean of Admission at the University of Virginia)

*Taken From: "Rock Hard Apps: How to Submit The Killer College Application,"
by Katherine Cohen, Ph.D. Published by Hyperion.*

...News from the Career Center

Lots of activity in Bristol Eastern's Career Center! Thus far we have had workshops on Army careers, Careers in the 21st Century, and "Networking Your Way to a Job."

Coming in the next few weeks: Careers in Social Work, Air Force Careers, "Being Your Own Boss, Technical Careers and U.S. Marines Careers. A reminder that these seminars are part of the requirements for Work Experience and Service Learning credit.

As always, if you have any questions, feel free to email me at lawrencehochman@ci.bristol.ct.us



What Parents Should Know About Cyber-Bullying

(Information gleaned from Google/National Crime Prevention Council)

“Teens lives exist in a variety of places such as school hallways, part-time jobs, and friends’ houses. Now many teens also have lives on the internet; and bullying has followed teens online. On-line bullying, called cyber- bullying happens when teens use the internet, cell phones or other devices to send or post text or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.”

As a parent, there are steps that you should encourage your teens to use to stop cyber- bullying and stay cyber-safe but first it would be important to know a few things.

First: How are Teens Cyber-bullied?

- Others can pretend that they are other people on line to trick others.
- Others can spread lies and rumors about victims.
- Others can trick people into revealing personal information.
- Others can send or forward mean text messages.
- Others can post pictures of victims without their consent.

Second: How Are Ways Victims Do React?

- They block communication with the cyber-bully.
- They delete messages without reading them.
- They talk about the bullying with a friend.
- They report the problem to an internet service provider or website moderator.

Third: How Can Cyber-bullying Be Prevented?

- Teens should refuse to pass along cyber-bullying messages.
- Teens should tell friends to stop cyber-bullying.
- Teens should block communication with cyber-bullies.
- Report cyber-bullying to you as the parent or another trusted adult.

We as counselors, teachers, and school administrators know how damaging cyber-bullying can be to victims. If there is one take away message from this article it would be to continue to instill in your teens that if they would not say something in person, they should not say it on line. Don't write it, don't forward it; delete it.