



Letter from the School Counselor

**Dear Holy Child Jesus Catholic Academy
Community,**

It is hard to believe we have been out of school for almost 2 months. Every day I am impressed by the strength in the communities around me. Sometimes strength means pushing through a tough day knowing better days will come, and sometimes it is asking for help when you need it. Whatever strength means today to you, you have made it through two months unlike ever before.

During this time, it can be helpful to understand how crisis impact families, including stress indicators and warning signs, as well as ways to decrease stress. Families function as a system, so when a crisis affects one family member it also impacts the others. Impacts a crisis can have on families are misunderstandings and hurt feelings, breakdown in communication, change in family patterns and roles, and conflicts in decision-making and resolutions. Especially now when there are physical constraints in getting space and time from family members, it is important to have open communication. One of the most beneficial ways to have positive communication is to make sure all family members have a time to share their feelings. When all family members feel validated, or that their feelings are heard, it is easier to create a sense of normalcy through times of uncertainty. This can be a more formalized "family meeting" where everyone discusses what they are struggling with, and the family talks about how they can make things better, or a less formal chat over breakfast or a breaktime with a child. The main thing is to allow each family member to have a time to share their feelings without criticism or judgement.

In an online forum recently, I read a post from a parent about when their child complains about something. This parent said that when their child

starts complaining they ask, "Do you need me to get involved, offer advice, or just listen to you," and 9/10 times the child just wants an ear. This doesn't mean that they won't later come to you for advice or help, but often children just need to express their feelings and know that their feelings are heard. For more information on how families are affected from crisis and coping strategies, check out the webinar for parents and caregivers I posted titled "Coping with a Crisis," as well as the video "Daily Check Ins" for different strategies to implement family check ins.

An unfortunate stress trigger right now for families may be job security. One resource this week that may be helpful is a free webinar on job searching during COVID-19. On Thursday May 14 at 12pm New York Public Library is having a webinar hosted by career coaches with tips on job searching, advice for older job seekers and new graduates, as well as help with government and federal job applications and unemployment applications. NYPL also offers free one-on-one career coaching remotely. Find the link to register for the webinar and other NYPL job resources under community resources on my site.

As always, keep trying to add movement into your day! One recent way I found to get kids to move was to have them try to teach me dances from social media. Although it is embarrassing for me due to my poor dance skills, the kids get a laugh and are moving!

Warmly,

Ms. Mottola

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