




55th Anniversary Reunion
Sat., June 17
@ Thornlea S.S.

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"RAISING RESILIENT KIDS" SEMINAR A SUCCESS WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The Raising Resilient Kids mental health seminar, funded by the Parents Reaching Out Grants, was held at our school library on May 16.

The Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grants program provides funding to school councils "to lead projects with a focus on the identification and removal of barriers that prevent parents and families from participating and engaging fully in their children's learning." Areas of focus include addressing social inclusion and racism, supporting mental health, parent engagement, and knowledge building for parents about de-streaming or literacy program.

Dr. Bisleen Attli gave a very informative presentation on the basics of mental health and how we can cultivate a positive environment at home. Parents and guardians took part in meaningful discussions and shared their experiences.

For those parents and guardians who were not able to attend the seminar, Dr. Attli is sharing some mental health tips in our newsletter.

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RAISING RESILIENT KIDS

DR. BISLEEN ATTLI, N.D.

Mental Health Definition:

- State of wellbeing in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively & make a contribution to his or her own community
- It includes our emotional, psychological & social wellbeing

Signs Mental Health Support Is Needed:

- Strong feelings of sadness or highs & lows of emotions that persist for more than 2 weeks
- Social withdrawal
- Change in appetite: eating too much or too little
- Change in sleeping patterns: sleeping too much or too little
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Growing inability to cope with daily problems and activities
- Delusions and hallucinations
- Substance abuse, self-harm, suicidal thoughts
- Teen-specific signs: depression (irritable, lethargy, lack of interest in activities, self-destructive behavior), anxiety (such as stomachaches, headaches)

Mental Health Myths vs. Facts:

Myth: Mental illnesses aren't real.

- **Fact:** Mental illnesses create distress and don't go away on their own.

Myth: They are an excuse for bad behavior.

- **Fact:** We need to remember that the illness, not the person, is behind these behaviors.

Myth: Bad parenting can cause mental illnesses.

- **Fact:** There is not one single factor that results in mental illnesses.

Myth: People diagnosed with mental illnesses are violent and dangerous.

- **Fact:** People who experience a mental illness are no more violent than people without.

Myth: People with mental illnesses can't work.

- **Fact:** Mental illnesses don't mean that someone is no longer capable of working.

Myth: Kids can't have mental illnesses like depression. Those are adult problems.

- **Fact:** Many mental illnesses first appear when a person is young.

Best Tip:

Embody the healthy lifestyle habits you want your teens to have and show them when they are around, so that they know what they should be working towards.

The 3 Pillars of Cultivating a Positive Environment at Home

Pillar #1: Get Connected

- Let go of the shame and guilt associated with getting help
- Model healthy relationships at home
- Communicate with your teens often
- Encourage them to express their feelings & respect them
- Use I-Statements (I feel _____, when _____, because _____. Next time please, _____.)

Prompts for Mental Health Discussions:

Check-In Prompts

- "How are you feeling mentally and emotionally these days?"
- "Are there any challenges or concerns you're facing?"

Navigating Stress & Pressure Prompts

- "What aspects of your life do you find the most stressful?"
- "How do you cope with pressure from school or peers?"

Understanding Emotions & Impact Prompts

- "What are some emotions you've been experiencing lately?"
- "How do these emotions affect your daily life?"

Navigating Relationships & Social Pressures Prompts

- "How do you handle conflicts with friends?"
- "Do you feel pressured to fit in or meet certain expectations?"

Seeking Help & Support Prompts

- "Who do you feel comfortable talking to when you're struggling?"
- "Are there any resources or support systems you'd like to explore?"



RAISING RESILIENT KIDS

DR. BISLEEN ATTLI, N.D.

Social Media Tips

- Encourage kindness - show them what is appropriate vs. not appropriate
- Teach them how to report "mean" accounts
- Monitor screen time & set limits
- Explain the purpose of apps and what they are used for (to get connected)
- Teach them the signs that indicate social media is having a negative impact on their mental health, so they can talk to you about it
- Schedule weekly social media check-ins
- Every app has a parent handbook!

Pillar #2: Use a Holistic Approach

Diet Tips

- This is the fuel our body uses to function
- Reduce sugary breakfasts
- Aim for 4-5 servings of veggies/day: soups, smoothies, blend into sauces, ready-made salads, frozen veggies
- Increase healthy fats and proteins, especially in the morning
- Get your teens involved with cooking

Movement Tips

- Changes that happen in the brain when you move:
 - Increases blood flow
 - Neurogenesis
 - Decreases stress
 - Increases feel-good hormones and neurotransmitters
 - Protects the brain against aging
- How much?
 - Minimum 30 mins/day for 5-6 days/week

Sleep Tips

- Brain consolidates information from the day and processes emotions
- Avoid technology 30 minutes before bed
- Create a sleeping ritual

Pillar #3: Mindset

- Work on building a positive mindset for yourself first!
- Have open communication - talk about feelings, challenges, encourage teens to problem solve and then give them suggestions, openly use words like mental health, feelings, etc.
- Praise the effort vs. the outcome, for example, "You must have worked hard on that!" instead of "Wow, you got an A+!"
- Encourage their strengths and allow them to pursue it
- Reward kindness
- Reframe a no into a yes
- Practice gratitude as a family

Challenging Negative Thoughts Questions:

Use these questions with your teens to help them challenge their negative thinking.

- What is the evidence that this thought is true? What is the evidence it's not true?
- How is this situation different if I look at it positively?
- Will this matter 1 year from now? How about 5 years from now?
- What would I tell a friend if they were in this situation?
- What is the worst that can happen? If it did, how would I cope with it or handle it?

"Parents aren't the people you come from. They're the people you want to be, when you grow up."

~ Jodi Picoult

