



The Home & School Connection

a newsletter from your School Psychologist and Counselor

November 2019

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SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST AWARENESS WEEK (SPA), November 11-15

SPA is a fun, easy way to highlight the important work school psychologists and other educators do to help all students thrive. This year's theme, "Find Your Focus" can mean a variety of meanings from paying attention, to being able to see an idea more clearly, to identifying an area of interest, or to being persistent or determined in your effort. Focusing can help us set goals, identify action steps, communicate need, and engage in discussions to help create the connection necessary for students to develop critical academic and social emotional skills.

GRATITUDE

Help foster gratitude at home*:

- In addition to teaching your child to say "thank you" when they receive a gift, explain to them why they should say "thank you." Virtues like gratitude are acquired behaviors that will develop with consistent support and encouragement from adults.
- Encourage your child to be mindful of people, events, activities, and things for which they can and should be grateful. Gently remind them, without nagging, about the many positive aspects of their lives, particularly in comparison to other children who may not be as fortunate.
- Encourage your child to write thank you notes when they receive gifts from relatives and friends, and to write in their notes why they are thankful for the gift. Also, encourage your child to write thank you notes to teachers and other school staff members who made a particular impression on your child or who helped him/her in some way. Have your child reflect on why he/she is grateful for this person, and have your child communicate this in the note.

Help foster gratitude at school*:

- **Gratitude Letters:** provide students the opportunity to write letters of gratitude to people who have helped them achieve a possibility, been kind to them, or have done something to make a difference in their worlds. Recipients could be family members, school staff, coaches or activity leaders, friends, etc. These expressions of gratitude can take the

form of a personal letter, an e-mail, an e-postcard, a note left in a locker or on a desk, etc. If desired, students could even write a poem, make a card, or draw a picture. While students may choose to thank someone they know personally, this need not be required. For example, writing letters to our men and women in military service is an excellent way to teach gratitude to someone they haven't met but who is making a sacrifice for them.

- **Gratitude Journals:** In this activity, students and teachers write daily in a gratitude journal at a designated time. The task could be to write 3–5 sentences about people, pets, activities, etc. for which they are grateful. For students requiring more structure, teachers could prompt them to write one sentence (or more) about each category or could even provide sentence starters. Younger children can draw pictures in their gratitude journals. Older children should express why they are grateful for the things they listed.
- **Daily Gratitude:** Teachers and students can start and end the school day by sharing statements of gratitude with one another. Teachers could create a rotation of students to serve as gratitude reporters and make one daily gratitude statement at each session. Teachers might choose to limit the students to thanking one another so that in addition to sharing gratitude, students can have the chance to be appreciated by peers.

*Adopted from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Gratitude Works Program.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Nov. 5, 12, 19, 26: Mindfulness-based stress reduction at Midtown Mindfulness (527 Plumas Street, Reno 89509), 6:00pm-6:45pm (FREE, donations accepted). Entrance is on the back side of the building, room directly behind the waiting room area. The door will be cracked open, feel free to join if you are running a few minutes late.

Nov. 16: Mindfulness-based stress reduction at UNR Redfield Campus (18600 Wedge Pkwy, Reno, NV 89511 room 230), 10:00am-10:45pm (FREE, donations accepted)

Nov. 27-29: Thanksgiving break!

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

UNR Sierra Families: This program is focused on to Improve Emotion Regulation and Relationships Among Families. Offers free (grant-funded) services for parents and families with a child between the ages of 0 and 10 years. It is designed for parents who have children with mild to moderate behavior problems that are disrupting family functioning. Additionally, we can help parents who are struggling with their own stress or mental health and such concerns are impacting their ability to parent. Our services aim to teach parents the skills they need to manage their own stress and emotions, in addition to skills to help them in their role as a parent. Parents will learn positive communication and behavior management skills to improve their relationships with their children. Our program is appropriate for all types of caregivers - biological parents, adoptive parents, resource parents, grandparents or other extended family members in caregiving roles. We can work with single parents, or multiple parents, as needed. Services are available in Spanish and English.

UNR Thrive: This program is focused on providing therapy for healing and recovery from interpersonally violent experiences. While the bulk of the clients that we see have histories of

domestic violence, we can provide treatment to anyone who has been impacted by violence (including children who have witnessed violence or abuse between their caregivers/parents). We are able to treat Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, anxiety, and difficulties maintaining healthy romantic relationships or friendships.

UNR La Clinica: We provide culturally specific services to Latina and Latino clients. While we specialize in providing services to individuals who have a history of experiencing violence (including treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), we can provide services to any Latina or Latino who is experiencing depression or anxiety. Services are available in Spanish.

TIPS & TRICKS: Computers and Electronic Devices *

With Thanksgiving and Winter breaks fast approaching, students will have more free time, typically resulting in more exposure to computers and electronic devices. The frequent use of computer devices, and the content viewed, has led to numerous concerns among both parents and teachers. Concerns have led many teachers, and parents, to conclude that activities such as playing video games, texting, being on social media, and listening to music are damaging students' ability to learn.

Recommendations for home: create a family media plan, use apps/programs to help monitor and filter access, model appropriate use, remove electronics at night, protect online privacy, discuss harmful content, provide support for cyberbullying.

Recommendations for school: review school policies and classroom rules for use of computer devices, use programs that help prevent problems more specific to school, impose limitations on use of electronic devices, discuss cyberbullying.

*Copies of the full monthly handout are available on our bulletin board (between our two offices). Stop by and grab a copy of *Computers and Electronic Devices: Helping Handout for School and Home*.

SUGGESTIONS

Looking for us to address a particular topic? Please place a note with your suggestion in the folder on our bulletin board.

See you in December!

Coraline Dubois & Lauren Mattingly