

Fighting the Holiday Blues

Helping Students Manage Winter/Holiday Stress and Anxiety

While this can be a fun and exciting time of year for many students, teachers, and staff, this can also be a time of increased **stress** and **anxiety** (as well as **sadness** and **depression**) for many of our students at TASD.

These negative feelings can occur for a variety of reasons, including changes in routine, uncertainty about holiday plans, concern for the family for financial reasons (*Will we be able to afford to heat our house this year?*), and feelings of being unsafe, especially when school is their "safe space" and they know they'll be away for extended periods of time.

Building Resiliency: Strategies for Educators & Parents

Approaches and habits that increase resiliency -- the equivalent of an umbrella to withstand the 'rainstorms' of life -- can and should be fostered in all children and adolescents (and adults, too!):

- Positive Attitudes and Emotions - providing words of encouragement and talking openly about all feelings associated with events in life allow students to process and better understand their emotions. Students who are **cared for, loved, and supported** learn to express positive emotions to others
- Competence - children who feel competent are resilient. Feelings of competence arise from success in school work or other activities. Make sure all students **have the opportunity to feel success(es) in your classroom** from time to time
- Network of Connections - connection with others fosters resiliency at all ages. Teachers can encourage students to **develop emotional attachments** with others who share their interests and other members of organized activities or classes. **Helping others** also fosters positive connections between students
- Physical Health - individuals who eat healthy and have the habit of regular exercise not only have improved resiliency, but it's also extremely helpful for emotional health. **Try to help students exercise, even when it's cold on the playground.**



Helpful -vs- Harmful Ways to Manage Emotions

Everyone experiences negative emotions in life. The GOOD NEWS is that everyone can do a better job of managing his/her emotions in a healthy way. One way to deal with uncomfortable emotions is to remember the word, PATH. PATH stands for: [Pause](#), [Acknowledge](#), [Think](#), [Help](#)

Step 1: [Pause](#)

- This step is important because instead of acting on emotions right away, you **stop and think things through**. Count to 100, or say the alphabet backward.

Step 2: [Acknowledge what you're feeling](#)

- Think about why you're feeling this way .. *"Are you mad at someone, or are you sad because your feelings got hurt?"*
- **Whatever it is that you are feeling**, remember that it is OK to feel this way.

Step 3: [Think](#)

- Now that you've taken a few minutes to think about what/why you're feeling this way, **think about ways to make yourself feel better**

Step 4: [Help](#)

- Take an action to **help yourself** based on what you came up with in the 'Think' step.

If you are having trouble thinking of "feel better" solutions, try one or more from this list:

- Read a story
- Watch a funny YouTube video
- Play with an animal
- Watch a movie you love
- Re-organize your room
- Make a list of places you want to travel someday
- Eat a healthy snack
- Drink a glass of water
- Take a nap
- Take a shower/bath
- Draw how you're feeling
- Make a 'gratitude list' THIS CAN BE A GREAT WHOLE-CLASS EXERCISE!!
- Punch a pillow
- Take a walk outside
- Let yourself cry
- Vent -- Talk to someone you've made a connection with in the past
- Help a stranger/volunteer
- Make a list of your strengths
- Play a video game
- Practice Belly Breathing -- Breathe in deep for 5 seconds, breathe out for 10 seconds. Repeat
- Do yoga



<https://s.smores.com/u/1cd6771f81ade8862bcb3a0e59aa8896.jpg>



<https://s.smores.com/u/4c4db427004b9f183c1230e2d1bb1c55.jpg>

<https://s.smores.com/u/51b1c2aa334590f2cff02d292f0f9b89.jpg>

Take a Walk

Talk to a Loved One

Read a Book

Crisis Situations:

Teachers: If you think a student may be in crisis, please **contact your school counselor or psychologist so that a Risk Assessment may be completed with that student.** We can determine during this assessment if Crisis Support and/or other resources in the community should be contacted.

Parents: If you think your son/daughter may be in crisis, **please contact the following:**

- **Crawford County:** Crawford County Mobile Crisis: 814-724-2732
- **Warren County:** Forest/Warren Human Services - Crisis Lines 1-814-726-8413 (8:30 am-5:00 pm) 1-800-406-1255 (after 5:00 pm, weekends & holidays)
- **Venango County:** Venango County - Emergency Contact Line 1-814-432-9111

School principals and counselors can also provide you with information about what can be done at school.

Students: If you think you may be feeling anxious and/or depressed, **please talk to SOMEONE, especially a TRUSTED ADULT.** There are many people at school, as well as your friends and family, who care about you, love you, and want you to feel better. You Can Feel Better!

- Call the National Suicide Prevention Line: 1-800-273-8255
- Talk to your school counselor or psychologist
- Text "MHA" to 741741 or call 1-800-273-TALK