

NEWSLETTER

Student Assistance Program

Connecting students and parents with the student assistance counselor.

N.J. SCHOOL VIOLENCE AWARENESS WEEK @ RUTHERFORD

October nineteenth through the twenty third is New Jersey School Violence Awareness Week. To that end, all of the student assistance counselors along with our school resource officer, Mr. Al Anderson, will be presenting information on school violence prevention through school wide assemblies, classroom presentations and through individual and group counseling. Additionally, teachers will also take part in discussing violence awareness through his or her lesson plans.

The New Jersey Department of Education also offers a comprehensive website entitled, "Keeping Our Kids Safe". This is a one stop site that offers a variety of reports and materials in regards to violence awareness in schools. The site can be accessed at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety>



School Violence Statistics

- Over one million high school students in America take a weapon to school at least once every 30 days.
- 1.3 million high school students are threatened or injured with a weapon on school property at least once every year
- 81% of school attackers tell someone of their plans beforehand
- 70% of youth said they would report another student who brought a weapon to school
- 83% said they would report another student if they could do it anonymously
- Over 50% said they would definitely or probably report even if people might think they were a snitch or a tattletale
- Only 3.3% said they would never report a weapon threat
- 52% of students know of an incident where someone brought a weapon to school. Of those, 61% did nothing about it.
- Over 75% of students in homes with guns know where a gun is hidden.

Statistics are from www.safeschoolsweek.org

MEET THE STUDENT ASSISTANCE COUNSELORS & INTERNS

Ms. Emily Bregman is the student assistance counselor at Union and Washington schools. Ms. Bregman may be reached at (201) 438-7675 ext. 3353 or through e-mail at ebre@rutherfordschools.org

Mrs. Kim Huzzy is the student assistance counselor at Pierrepont and Lincoln schools. Mrs. Huzzy may be reached at (201) 438-7675 ext. 4375 or through e-mail at khuz@rutherfordschools.org

Mr. Jeff Doorn is the student assistance counselor at Rutherford High School. Mr. Doorn may be reached at (201) 438-7675 ext. 2312 or through e-mail at jdoor@rutherfordschools.org



Mr. Stavros Siskas, a special education teacher at Union School, is interning with Ms. Bregman at Union School. He is pursuing a Master's in School Counseling from Montclair State University.

Ms. Kristy DelMastro, a third grade teacher at Lincoln School, is interning with Mrs. Huzzy at Lincoln School. She is pursuing a Master's in School Counseling from William Paterson University.

Ms. Michelle Batch is interning with Mr. Doorn at Rutherford High School. She is pursuing an Advanced Standing Master's in Social Work from Monmouth University.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO FOSTER RESILIENCE AND HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT?

Many protective factors have been found to promote healthy development and resilience among young people. Collected here from a number of sources are some evidence-based steps parents can take to help their children develop with resilience and good mental health:

- Give your children love and attention every day.
- Show your children appropriate behaviors by the way you act.
- Listen to and talk with your children—about anything—to develop an open, trusting relationship.
- Reward your child for good behavior or a job well done.
- Establish clear and consistent limits and rules.
- Do not hit your children.
- Know where your children are, what they are doing, and with whom.
- Communicate with teachers and be involved in your children's school.
- Set high expectations for your children.
- Create opportunities for your children to be contributing members of the family and community.
- Know your children well enough to discern the warning signs of unusual behavior.
- Know when to intervene to protect your children.
- Get help if you think you need it.
- Make sure your children do not have access to guns, drugs, or alcohol.
- Teach your children ways to avoid becoming either a victim of violence or a bully.
- Learn ways to avoid conflict in the family; learn about and use anger-control techniques, if necessary.
- Monitor the media to which your children are exposed.
- Encourage your children's understanding of your family's cultural traditions and values.



THE SCHOOL BULLY CAN TAKE A TOLL ON YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH

Ask any child what a bully looks like, and he or she is likely to describe someone who is bigger and stronger. Yet, while bullies certainly are known for their ability to overpower others physically, mental bullying can be just as damaging to children. When children are picked on by bullies, whether physically or mentally, many feel the need to suffer in silence for fear that speaking up will provoke further torture. But bullying is not a problem that usually just takes care of itself. Action needs to be taken. Parents and caregivers are sometimes reluctant to intervene in conflicts between children, but they *can* teach their children *not* to take part in or become victims of bullying. Children can be taught to assert themselves effectively. As a caring adult, you can:

- **Demonstrate assertive behavior.** Teach children to ask for things directly and respond directly to each other. It is OK to say “no” to an unacceptable demand. Let children role-play.
- **Teach social skills.** Suggest ways for children to compromise or to express their feelings in a positive way. Show children how to resolve problems firmly and fairly.
- **Identify potential friendship problems and correct them.** Teach children how to ignore routine teasing. Not all provocative behavior must be acknowledged. Teach children the value of making new friends.
- **Teach common courtesy skills.** Teach children to ask nicely and to respond appropriately to polite requests.
- **Identify ways to respond to bullies.** Help children identify acts of aggression, bossiness or discrimination. Encourage children not to give up objects or territory to bullies. This discourages bullying behavior.
- **Demonstrate the rewards of personal achievement.** Teach children to trust and value their own feelings. They will be more likely to resist peer pressure, respect warm and caring adults, and be successful in achieving their personal goals. Children who are victims or witnesses to acts of bullying often suffer from serious emotional problems including depression and anxiety.

The information listed above was obtained from the United States Department of Health & Human Services Website- Center for Mental Health Services. The site can be accessed at <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov>