

# Student Assistance Program



# Counseling

- ◆ **Friendship Circles:** Topic oriented groups that focus on student's areas of need, such as anxiety, anger management, social skills, self-esteem and changing families.
- ◆ **Insight Groups:** Middle and High School level support groups that provide support to students with social, emotional and family issues. These students form bonds within the groups that provide them with a social network in and out of the group setting.
- ◆ **Individual Counseling:** Some students require more individualized attention because of more significant social/emotional or family issues, or may feel uncomfortable speaking in a group setting. These students receive individual support from the SACs on an as-needed basis.



# Confidentiality

Privacy is the key to a successful Student Assistance Program.

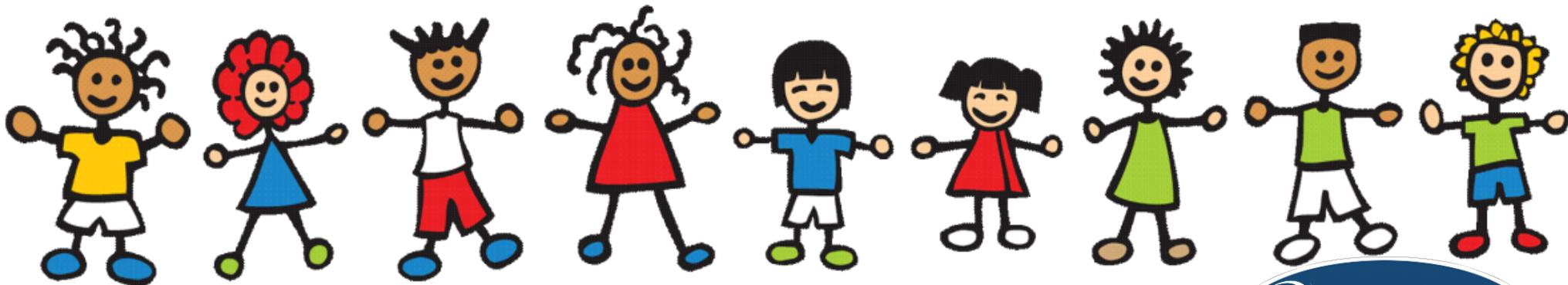
Students sign contracts and understand the seriousness of maintaining confidentiality within a counseling group. This understanding creates a safe environment to share personal information with peers.

**PRIVATE**



# Sense of Community

Being part of a group helps students to feel connected at school. For students who are new to the school, experiencing social difficulty, or feeling a sense of isolation, groups can help them find their place within the school community.



# Anxiety Management Counseling

Students who are struggling with anxiety are given support and taught strategies to deal with their anxiety, whether it is a specific phobia or stressor, such as school phobia or test anxiety, or if the anxiety manifests as generalized anxiety.



# Anger Management Counseling:



Students who have difficulty with frustration tolerance or controlling anger are provided with support and strategies to help them maintain positive functioning in school. When children cannot control behavior when experiencing these emotions, they often spend a great deal of time unavailable to learn or unable to stay in the classroom setting.

# Social Skills

Social skills group teaches students about verbal as well as nonverbal behaviors involved in social interactions. SACs help students learn to interpret these and other social signals, so that they can determine how to act appropriately in the company of other students in an academic and social setting. Interpersonal skills are strengthened allowing the student to feel more confident in school.



# School Phobia/Refusal Intervention

Often associated with separation anxiety, SACs provide hands-on support to students and their families to assist them in transitioning into school and maintaining themselves throughout the school day. Missed time in the classroom tends to exacerbate the anxiety and makes it more difficult for those students to stay in school.



# Character Education Lessons

SACs provide classroom lessons during Violence Prevention Week and Week of Respect during the month of October. Throughout the year, other social and emotional topics (test anxiety, problematic social behavior, stress management, recess conflict, etc.) are addressed through classroom lessons on an as needed basis.



# Crisis Intervention



Student safety is the number one concern in school. Students who are experiencing suicidal or violent thoughts, or students who have demonstrated self-harming behaviors, need immediate intervention to ensure the safety of everyone. SACs assess the severity of these thoughts and behaviors and take appropriate action.

# Bullying and Violence Prevention and Intervention



With the implementation of the 2011 NJ HIB Law, schools are responsible for Bullying Prevention Education and immediate intervention. The SACs have been deemed the Anti-Bullying Specialists in the district and are responsible for investigating incidents of bullying, providing bullying prevention education and are available as a resource in this area to students, teachers and parents. SACs work with targets of bullying and students who have bullied to promote positive behavior after an incident of bullying.



# HIB Law

HIB means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a **single incident** or a **series of incidents**, that: Is reasonably **perceived as being motivated** either by an **actual or perceived characteristic**, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by **any other distinguishing characteristic**; Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus; or **off school grounds**, as provided for in *N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15.3*, Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; **and that** A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of **physically or emotionally harming** a student or **damaging the student's property**, or placing a student in reasonable fear of **physical or emotional harm** to his person or damage to his property; **or** Has the effect of **insulting or demeaning** any student or group of students; **or** Creates a **hostile educational environment** for the student by interfering with a student's education or by **severely or pervasively** causing physical or emotional harm to the student

# Normal Conflict vs. Bullying

## Normal Conflict

- Involves people with similar degrees of power
- Involves a mutual disagreement
- Is reciprocal
- Both parties are responsible
- Can be fairly resolved with compromise

## Bullying

- Involves an imbalance of power
- Involves one party exerting their needs
- Is one-sided
- Responsible for wrong doing
- Hurtful behavior from one party against another



# Conflict Resolution

When students are involved in peer conflicts, it can be all-consuming and academics often take a back seat. Mediating these conflicts allows students to re-focus on their work and feel more comfortable in school.



# Rachel's Challenge

## Friends of Rachel's Club (F.O.R. Club)

*Rachel's Challenge* was created in 1999 by the father of Rachel Joy Scott, who was the first victim in the Columbine High School shooting on April 20, 1999. The program was developed to continue Rachel's legacy of creating a culture of kindness and respect throughout schools across the country.

The students in Pierrepont and Union school formed the Friends of Rachel's Club (F.O.R.) with the goal to create a permanent cultural change in the school by promoting random acts of kindness and compassion.



# Mentor Groups, Heroes and Cool Kids



Rutherford has implemented after-school mentor groups in which middle school students work with younger students to promote positive self-esteem, healthy lifestyle and personal empowerment. Heroes and Cool Kids is a program in which high school students address relevant adolescent issues with their middle school counterparts.



# Peer Mediation

Students are trained to help other students resolve conflicts in a fair and objective manner, before issues escalate and need to be addressed by school administrators. Mediators help younger students talk through conflicts and come to mutually acceptable agreements.



# Promoting Emotional Wellness: Tips for Parents

- ◆ **Expectations:** Make sure your expectations, for yourself as well as for others, are realistic.
- ◆ **Goals:** Develop and work toward short-term and long-term goals that are realistic and achievable.
- ◆ **Laugh:** Laughter boosts your immune system, eases pain and relaxes your body – a natural and enjoyable stress reducer.

# Promoting Emotional Wellness: Tips for Parents

- ◆ **Be a friend to yourself:** Treat yourself the way you would treat a dear friend. Be kind and understanding of yourself and your actions and forgive your mistakes.
- ◆ **Take responsibility:** Regardless of what happens, you are in control of your own happiness. Relinquishing responsibility for the good or blaming others for the bad breeds helplessness and hopelessness.
- ◆ **Positivity:** Surrounding yourself with positive people will help you see the positive in most situations. It is hard to be realistic when you are surrounded by negative thinking.



# Promoting Emotional Wellness: Tips for Parents

- ◆ **Forgive:** Holding on to anger breeds resentment, which is toxic to relationships and toxic to the person holding onto resentment. Try to let anger go by reminding yourself of times you have been forgiven.
- ◆ **Accept Change:** We live in a constantly changing world. Change is something that can be very challenging for people, particularly if these changes are not a choice or are unexpected. Change is an excellent opportunity for growth if you can accept and go with the change instead of fighting it.



# Parent Education Workshops



Parent education workshops are held during evening hours several times a year. Workshops are geared toward helping parents best support and educate their children on relevant topics, based on age and current issues within the community.

# Upcoming Parent Education

## **Bullying: What Parents Need to Know**

Where: Union school  
When: April 20, 2016  
Time: 6:30 p.m.

## **Raising Strong, Confident Daughters**

Where: Pierrepont School  
When: May 19, 2016  
Time: 6:30 p.m.

**RSVP To Kimberly Huzzy-Simansky**

**[khuzzy@rutherfordschools.org](mailto:khuzzy@rutherfordschools.org)**

**201-438-7675 ext. 4375**



# Community Mental Health Services

## Private Mental Health Centers

- ◆ Non-profit organizations that receive government funding to serve residents in need of care
- ◆ Fees are on a sliding scale based on ability to pay
- ◆ **Services include:**
  - ◆ Group Therapy
  - ◆ Medication assessment
  - ◆ Specialized day programs
  - ◆ Psychiatric Evaluations
  - ◆ Monitoring
  - ◆ Housing



# Community Mental Health Services

## West Bergen Mental HealthCare

💧 [www.westbergen.org](http://www.westbergen.org)

## Careplus NJ, Inc

💧 [www.careplusnj.org](http://www.careplusnj.org)

## Vantage Health System

💧 [www.vantagenj.org](http://www.vantagenj.org)

## Comprehensive Behavioral Healthcare

💧 [www.cbhcare.com](http://www.cbhcare.com)



# New Jersey System of Care Fact Sheet

- **Step 1- PerformCare** – Contacted System Administrator, it is the initial point of contact for referring and coordinating System of Care services for youth ages 5-21 with behavioral and mental health needs
  - 1-877-652-7624
- **Step 2 – Care Management Organization** – Bergen’s Promise – provides full face to face service planning for youth with moderate to intense needs.
  - 201-712-1170 or [www.bergenspromise.org](http://www.bergenspromise.org)
- **Step 3 – Children’s Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS)** – Provides face to face crisis response within one hour of notification.
  - 201-796-9479



Thank You

