Director's Corner

The Longwood Mental Health team has been hard at work supporting student, family, and educator needs this academic year. We are providing proactive supports to students and returning to our roots while working to maintain increasing mental health acuity with our students. I hope to share with you quarterly, the amazing and therapeutic events and supports provided by our amazing team. I hope you enjoy our inaugural edition of Mental Health Happenings.

Dr. Stephanie Columbia

At the district level our two largests projects this year are to continue to educate and train our community, staff and students in Youth Mental Health First Aid. You can learn more about this program at the YMHFA website. We are proud to have seven nationally trained trainers on staff and will continue to share this potentially life saving information.

We continue to work on Restorative Practice implementation and training. This important philosophy of building relationships and strengthening connections can only improve academic and social learning throughout our community. You can learn more about RP Here at the International Institute for Restorative Practices.

We are working in all buildings and with outside agencies to establish an interconnected system framework to further connect positive behavioral supports and mental health support for students and staff.

“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.” - Fred Rogers
The middle school counselors hosted their first Health and Wellness fair last month where students were able to learn about various health-related topics from nursing students at Molloy College. The counselors have also been making their rounds around to classrooms delivering lessons on monthly topics such as bullying, empathy and community building. After the new year, the counselors will be meeting with each 6th grade student to complete an individual progress review as part of the new New York State regulations. The Psychologists and Social Worker are hard at work with student needs and increasing social and emotional skill sets.

Wellness at the Elementary Level K-4

Charles E Walters Elementary  
Coram Elementary

Ridge Elementary  
West Middle Island Elementary

Our Elementary Mental Health Teams have been bursting with exciting new programs and interventions for students. From "Movement Highways" that help students to relieve stress and refocus, to mindfulness practices during the morning announcements. Students are responding positively to these proactive supports. We continue to implement "The Leader in Me" and have begun work on introducing restorative practices, a philosophy of building relationships and taking responsibility. We are partnering with SEPTA to increase awareness of differently abled student achievements and increasing our ability to promote the least restrictive environment for students as we collaborate between classrooms. PBIS continues to be a top tier whole school intervention which students enjoy and our team is key in maintaining implementation. The team has been pushing into the classrooms, working collaboratively with teachers to deliver social and emotional lessons as part of our comprehensive Social Emotional Learning Curriculum. We delivered lessons on the following 4 themes: Following Directions, Being a good friend, Identification of Feelings and Anger Management Self Advocacy. The K-4 team is committed to nurturing a culture that values wellness and mental health for every student.

Longwood Middle School

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Junior High School

The Junior High Mental Health Team has designed new procedures to working collaboratively in terms of crisis management. The counseling team is working on more opportunities for push in programming enabling all students to meet them and connect a face to a service. A successful evening of internet safety was completed for the community in November. The team is working on implementation of Behavior Support Plans and other tier 2 interventions to assist students in achieving their potential academically and socially. Together, the Psychologists, Social Worker and School Counselors provide a comprehensive program for 7th and 8th grade students focusing on organization, study habits, emotional regulation and social skills.

Longwood High School

The High School Wellness team hosted the 9th grade Wellness Day during which students rotate to receive four workshops on social and emotional wellness. The upper classes each have an assembly to address social and emotional wellness. These workshops included learning about healthy relationships, the dangers of vaping, and the benefits of mindfulness and yoga. Many presentations were delivered including a Dignity Act presentation to all 9th grade students and staff presentations on Youth Mental Health First Aid. Behavioral support and proactive group support has been established in our 9th grade teams with short term group sessions focused on skill building and social and emotional health.

District Level Mental Health Support

The district 504 office has been busy working on aligning the 504 process with supporting offices and working with our new referral and meeting process. Our Social Work Liaison for transitional housing and foster care office is working diligently on providing needed services to our transitionally housed students while supporting building needs with transportation and supplies. Attendance initiatives are underway in all buildings helping to increase attendance.

Community Resource Corner

The National Association for Mental Illness is a great resource for schools and communities. Click here for a great resource about warning signs and symptom. Mentalhealth.gov is another wonderful resource with basic information about anxiety, depression and other common issues. And Family Service League is a local agency with counseling options for students, you can read about them here.

Website: http://longwood.k12.ny.us/departments/mental_health
Contact: 631.345.2888
Email: mentalhealth@longwoodcsd.org
What is Restorative Practice?
The fundamental unifying hypothesis of restorative practices is that human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them.

“Restorative Practices are a framework for building community and for responding to challenging behavior through authentic dialogue, coming to understanding, and making things right.”

For more information: click here to visit the International Institute for Restorative Practices

Upcoming Events and Opportunities to Join Together....

Youth Mental Health First Aid: This fabulous program is an 8 hour training that ends with a certification in YMHFA for all participants. We are happy to offer this class to the community, staff and students over 16. To accommodate working families, we are offering the program over two evenings from 6-10 PM and on one Saturday from 9-6. Please watch facebook for the next dates or email- there will be a Saturday class in January. Stephanie.columbia@longwoodcsd.org

To better understand the needs of the community, the following form was set up to record your requests for evening programs please vote here.