



# NIMITZ MIDDLE SCHOOL

## MENTAL HEALTH CORNER

### FACULTY NEWSLETTER



FALL 2016

#### *Mental Health Tips: Did You Know??*

There are **four** major components to achieving good mental health:

1. Nutrition
2. Sleep
3. Exercise
4. Coping Skills

#### Teacher Tools:

##### Strategies to Decrease Anxiety in the Classroom

- Learn relaxation techniques (e.g., deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, mindfulness) and implement them during class
- Rehearse and practice responses to stressful situations
- Break down large tasks into smaller, more attainable tasks
- Avoid demanding perfection from oneself or others; instead, encourage them to feel good about doing a competent or "good enough" job
- Take a break from stressful activities or situations during class by providing some free time for students and you, as teachers, to engage in something less stressful
- Encourage students to build a network of friends who can help them cope in positive ways

#### **How do we increase Resilience in Students?**

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from negative impacts and cope well with challenges. Factors that promote resilience among adolescents include having caring relationships with adults, an easygoing disposition, cognitive skills, confidence, and strong internal values. Students with resilience will have healthy coping skills to deal with stress. They will also possess good thinking skills, talents, large groups of friends, and belief in oneself.

#### **Let's Promote Awareness about Suicide Prevention**

Although a very touchy subject and a depressing one at that, suicide amongst students is very real and the number of students who have completed suicide or have attempted to complete suicide has increased over time. Although there is no specific correlation and it is not always the case, one of the leading factors that lead to suicide is Depression. Many students have depression, which will also lead them to engage in risky behaviors, poor coping skills, and negative externalizing behaviors, such as self-injurious behaviors. It is important to remember as school personnel that depression is more than just sad or a depressed mood, and that if students do not believe they are getting enough help to improve their mental health, many students will turn to suicide.

Fortunately, there are preventative measures that LAUSD and Nimitz are offering that deal with suicide prevention. Nimitz's Psychiatric Social Worker, Ms. Martha Gomez, and her MSW interns, Stephanie Gin and Jessica Orellana, are conducting a classroom intervention titled *Erika's Lighthouse* in all 6<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. LAUSD also has a suicide prevention, intervention, and post intervention bulletin, and LAUSD School Mental Health Suicide Prevention guidelines for parents, teachers, and school personnel (a.k.a. Crisis Team). There is awareness towards suicide in order to decrease the growth of numbers pertaining to how many students have attempted or completed suicide.

**"Mental Health is not a destination, but a process. It's about how you drive, not where you're going." – Noam Shpancer**



## Psychiatric Social Worker



**\*Ms. Martha Gomez**, Psychiatric Social Worker (PSW), is located in the Library and can be reached at ext. 5468. Ms. Gomez provides individual and group counseling services to students at Nimitz Middle School who may have issues related to depression, anxiety, self-esteem, abuse, grief, anger management, trauma, suicidal ideation, among other concerns. Her service role includes serving as a link between the students, family, teachers, and other school officials to deliver or find appropriate mental health services. These services are provided to assist the students in reaching their fullest potential in the academic, social, and emotional areas of their life.

School Social Workers play vital roles in promoting and supporting student achievement, parent involvement, school safety, and professional pathways for lifelong learning.

### School Social Work Practice Areas

- Coordination of Services Team
- Reducing Self-Injurious Behavior
- Suicide Prevention/Assessment
- Domestic Violence/Child Abuse
- Referrals to mental health services
- Parent Psychoeducation

\*Ms. Gomez and her two MSW social work interns will be facilitating the interventions: FOCUS (Classroom and Group Modality), Erika's Lighthouse (Classrooms), **Self-Esteem/Coping Skills, Grief and Cognitive Behavior Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS)** group. Group interventions vary in length. The group meetings will alternate weekly to ensure that students do not fall behind academically. If you would like to refer any students that could benefit from these groups, or need more information regarding the specifics, please contact Ms. Gomez or interns ☺Thank you!

### \*\*Upcoming Events\*\*



#### SUBSTANCE USE WORKSHOP FOR PARENTS

On November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016, there will be a workshop offered to parents about substance use conducted by the Nimitz Middle School's very own Psychiatric Social Worker. The workshop is to help educate parents about the use of drugs and alcohol and the effects they have on youth's overall mental health.

**\*For questions or information about this event, please contact Ms. Gomez, PSW\***

#### Parents in Control

Starting November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016, there will be a training offered to parents of students attending Nimitz Middle School called "Parents in Control", which will be split amongst 4 different sessions. These sessions will focus on building skills used in everyday parenting.

**\*For questions or information about this event, please contact Ms. Gomez, PSW\***

#### \*\*ATTENDANCE COMPETITION!\*\*

In efforts to promote a higher attendance rate, PSA Ms. Gutierrez is excited to announce that there will be a **\*Home Room Competition\*** the week **before** and **after** Thanksgiving break!!! Please encourage your students to come to school everyday and on time! Winners will be awarded an ice cream social! ☺

Competition weeks:

- November 14<sup>th</sup> to November 18<sup>th</sup>.
- November 28<sup>th</sup> to December 2<sup>nd</sup>

