



September, 2021

"You lose, you smile, and you come back the next day. You win, you smile, you come back the next day."

- Ken Griffey Jr.

St. Cat's Counseling

Letter to Families

I can't be the only person still watching the Mariners as they refuse to give up what little hope is left for them to make the playoffs. In large part, this team is fun because of the young players and the attitudes they play with, not because of their superior skills or dominance. As fans, we've been playing the long game, waiting for these young stars to develop and for the M's to make the playoffs once again.

Mental health requires a commitment to the long game. We desire recovery and health to come fast, as if we are waiting for a cast to come off to see the healed bone. However, finding our mental health is a continually process that won't come with a visual cue. Now with our kiddos coming back from an unconventional year, they deserve the same patience with their development and mental health. Many of my school counseling colleagues are seeing the same challenges with their students: increased visits to the counseling office for advice and emotional expression, delayed social skills, and higher social anxiety and feelings of overwhelm. It may take years to make up some of our "losses" from COVID, but we will get there. Our priorities may need to change for a bit, but it will be worth it.

Do I think the Mariners will make the playoffs? Eh, probably not. But am I ecstatic that we are back in person, learning from our teachers and in-person relationships? Absolutely. Let's commit to the long game of tuning into mental health with patience, consistency, and hope this year. It's good to be back!

Kevin Ward, School Counselor kward@stcatherineschool.net

Updates From My Office

- St. C's Parent-Counselor Learning Sessions

A new initiative I am bringing to St. Catherine's this year is parent-counselor learning sessions, where a topic is discussed under the umbrella of our student's holistic health and parenting. With mental health concerns on the steep incline and basic mental health support becoming harder to find, the goal is to create a space for learning and sharing. In these meetings, I don't only desire to teach, but to give the floor to parents in the community to learn from one another. Some possible topics I am thinking of are:

Anxious Kiddos and their Families
Helping Children in split families
Parent-Child Tech Partnership
Building Resilient Families

*Do you have a topic you want to propose or are you interested in helping with these sessions?
Email me!*

- **A Fresher-Upper: What does the counselor do (and not do)?**

With this being the first newsletter home, I would like to take a moment to remind you of what I can provide and what I am unable to provide here at school, since I understand that my role is not always black and white. To do so, instead of writing on and on, I decided to utilize [this graphic from the American School Counseling Association](#). If you are unsure, please go ahead and reach out to me. I would rather you do than you don't and will never be offended if you ask for something I can't provide!

- **Roscoe has been practicing his counseling skills!**

- [Animals and Our Mental Health](#)



Resources of the Month

- [3 Conversation Starters](#) - 3 Conversation starters to try with your teens for when “How was your day” just doesn't work as well as you hoped.
- [Sound Discipline Calendar](#) - Sound Discipline webinars and trainings. This local place is always a great resource for parents. They provide many services that may be of interest!
- Even when our kids have left home to go back to school, we are always looking for ways to create a positive home environment. Wide Open Schools can help with that - [Wide Open Schools](#)
- GoZen helps transform your kid's worry into resilience! - <https://gozen.com/>
- ADDitude Magazine offers webinars to learn about ADHD. Perfect for October which is ADHD Awareness Month! [ADHD Webinars and Podcasts for Parents and Adults \(additudemag.com\)](#)
- **Apple Pie Play dough! (recipe below)**. Squeezing, smashing, and molding play dough is a fantastic sensory activity. With added scents, it activates your senses of touch and smell. Becoming aware of our senses teaches kids how to ground themselves and be mindful.

Ingredients:

- 1 Cup Flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp oil
- 1 tsp red food coloring
- 1 cup water

Instructions:

- Combine dry ingredients
- Add wet ingredients
- Cool over medium heat until the dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl
- Let the dough cool and then play!

- **Mental Health Resources:** If you are struggling to find mental health resources in the city, you are NOT alone! Mental health resources are more in demand these days, but you can still put your name on waiting lists, and check in periodically for new resources. Here is my updated list:
 - [St. C's Mental Health Referrals](#)
 - Low cost from NAMI Seattle: [Low Cost and Sliding Scale Psych Providers](#)
 - Emergency lines from NAMI: [NAMI Helplines](#)

[St. Catherine's School Counseling](#) – My page on the school site is under heavy construction, but will soon be the place I house all these resources and more.

As always, remember that it shows strength and courage to ask for help or advocate for the mental health of someone else. You can save these numbers to be prepared:

Crisis supports are available if your student is concerned for themselves or others. [Teen Link](#) can be reached daily from 6-10 PM at 1-866-833-6546; the following resources can be reached 24/7 365 days a year: [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): 800-273-8255 / Worried about someone on social media? [Support on Social Media - Lifeline](#); the [24-hr Crisis Line](#): 1-866-427-4747; and the [Crisis Text Line](#) can be reached via SMS 24/7— simply text “HEAL” to 741-741.

And check this new resource fresh out of WA, “Only7Seconds,” that aims to tackle loneliness with connection!

[only7seconds](#)

If you have any questions, concerns, or you think someone needs help, please reach out to me and we can discuss how and when to reach out.