



Counseling Department Newsletter

Welcome to the Ottoson Middle School newsletter from the counseling department. You can expect updates about school-wide SEL interventions and other mental health school resources.

April Highlights

[Reading Recommendation](#)

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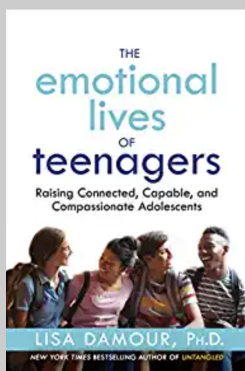
[Sleep hygiene and tips](#)

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Reading/Listening Recommendations



The Emotional Lives of Teenagers by Lisa Damour, PhD

“Lisa’s latest book is an urgently needed guide to help parents understand their teenagers’ intense and often fraught emotional lives—and how to support them through this critical developmental stage.

Mental Health Screening

In March Ottoson Counselors completed the second round of universal mental health screening for 7th and 8th grade students. We use the [GAD7](#) to screen for anxiety and the [BSAD](#) to screen for depression. Following April vacation small group counseling will begin for students struggling with anxiety and depression. If you would like your child to participate, please contact your child’s school counselor

FAQs about mental health screening can be [found here](#).

Staff Spotlight



Ron Colosi is in his 22nd year as a school counselor in Arlington - most of which has been at Ottoson. He has also worked at Gibbs and AHS, as well as one year at a therapeutic day school in Charlestown before coming to Arlington and a short stint as a rehabilitation counselor at a facility for people with traumatic brain injuries. Outside of work, he enjoys singing in his band and playing broomball. He currently has a dog named Mr. Bojangles (Bo) and a Savannah Cat named Ruxin.

Sleep Hygiene



Most students need more sleep. Consider helping your kids by limiting caffeine, avoid having devices in their rooms at night, setting a screen time curfew and by creating a bedtime routine. Check out this [article](#) for more helpful tips.

WHAT DOES A SCHOOL COUNSELOR DO?

Middle school counselors are professional educators with a mental health perspective who understand and respond to the challenges presented by today's diverse student population. Middle school counselors do not work in isolation; rather they are integral to the total educational program.

- Social/emotional support
- Individual and group counseling
- Facilitate meetings with Learning Community team and parents
- Provide mediation for students
- Provide referrals and work with outside resources to manage student needs
- Academic planning and monitoring students' academic progress
- Scheduling process

New Community Resources

Free English Classes for Arlington Adults: Arlington Community Education is offering free daytime and evening English classes for Arlington residents ages 18+. For more information and to register please go [here](#).

April Break Meal Assistance: Arlington EATS will be offering free pre-packed bags of groceries to any family with kids in Arlington schools who could use extra food support over April break. Vacation lunch bags packed with nutritious, easy to prepare, kid-friendly foods are available to pick up on Friday, April 14 at our new building at 117 Broadway. [Sign up here](#) by April 7, or call 339-707-6757 ext. 6 to find out more. Visit Arlington EATS at arlingtoneats.org to learn more about getting help with food, how to volunteer, and other ways to address food insecurity in Arlington.

Sanborn Foundation

Financial assistance for Arlington residents living with cancer

Community Summer Programs

[Arlington Center for the Arts](#)

[Arlington Recreation Department](#)

[Arlington Boys and Girls Club](#)

[Fidelity House Summer Program](#)

Specialized Camp/Internship Opportunities

Camp Kessem

Summer camp for children who have a parent with cancer. It is one week of free overnight camp. Additional information for summer camps for grieving children can be [found here](#).

TeenTok Virtual Paid internship for students 13-19 years old, Create online content or help with marketing. Application is due April 12th and can be [found here](#).

New Mental Health Support Resources:

[Ottoson School Counseling](#)- many great resources are linked here, including previous newsletters.

April 12th, 7pm *Parenting Kids and Teens on the Spectrum* : Youtube live link here: [Parenting youth on the spectrum](#)

[BYRT Parent Supporting Parent Groups](#)

[BRYT Family Engagement Resource Library](#)

Massachusetts Launched a new [Community Behavioral Health Centers \(CBHCs\)](#) serve as an entry point for timely, high-quality and evidence-based treatment for mental health conditions and substance use disorders, including routine appointments, urgent visits, and 24/7 community-based crisis intervention as an alternative to hospital emergency departments. CBHCs receive enhanced state funding through alternative payment models to support flexible, person-centered treatment.

Parenting Support groups are available online. [PPAL support groups](#) offer parents and other family members an opportunity to join others parenting children with emotional, behavioral and mental health needs. People at support groups share stories, listen and help each other heal and grow. They also share tips, resources and information you can only find from someone who has been there. PPAL support groups are facilitated by someone who has raised or is still raising a child with emotional, behavioral or mental health needs.

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