

MASSABESIC HIGH SCHOOL

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Hello Massabesic High School Students & Families,

As our students and staff enter into the upcoming April Break, I am writing to provide an update on the recent tragedy of a loss of an MHS student, next steps in our continued support of students, staff, families, and other caregivers, and to address concerns expressed from our school community; most notably challenges that are present in extensive use of social media. I welcome our collective school community to be mindful of comments and content on social media and the potential impact on others.

Experiencing loss is a complex challenge for all stakeholders in our school - people experience loss in different ways and the support that is needed is also complex. In light of this, students and staff have been provided with opportunities to meet with counselors and social workers on Wednesday and Thursday. Counseling staff and administration will be on campus on the dates and times listed below during the April Break to provide support for students and families. Students and families are welcome to come to campus and speak with our staff or to connect with friends/other students.

Friday, April 12 from 8:00 am - 11:00 am
Tuesday, April 16 from 8:00 am - 2:00 pm
Wednesday, April 17 from 8:00 am - 2:00 pm
Thursday, April 18 from 8:00 - 2:00 pm

Outside of these dates and times of on-campus support, the following resources are available for students and families experiencing distress during this break from school:

- A. **The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** provides 24/7 free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for individuals and loved ones, and best practices for emotional and mental health. To access this support you need to simply dial '988' and you will be directly connected to the service. https://988lifeline.org/?utm_campaign=Vibrant988AwarenessQ423&utm_source=Bing&utm_medium=Search&msclkid=680ca825a69f1cacc3c5cd5e83d6f757
- B. The **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** has a national helpline and a Maine-based helpline. These organizations provide a wealth of resources and services and immediate communication. The NAMI Maine Helpline is available M-F 8-4:30.
 - NAMI-Maine Link: <https://namimaine.org/contact/>
 - NAMI - National Hotline for Mental Health Crisis Link: <https://www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities/Responding-to-Crises/National-Hotline-for-Mental-Health-Crises-and-Suicide-Prevention>

C. **Emergency Room Services:** Local Emergency Room departments are equipped with Crisis Evaluation teams to help individuals process through crises they may be experiencing. If you feel that your child is in danger, or a danger to themselves, I would encourage you to seek out these services at a local ER (Sanford, Biddeford, Portland, etc.)

D. (Link to Document) [Tips for Keeping Your Child Safe](#)

E. (Link Document) [How to Support Grieving Youth](#)

Tragic events raise many questions and concerns, and there are many different responses to tragedies. The staff at Massabesic High School have been committed to teaching students appropriate conduct and to respect one another - we remain committed to this teaching and support. We know our community shares these values and we appreciate your collaboration in these efforts.

Regards,

Ty Thurlow, Principal