

March 17, 2020

Dear Harvard Public School Students and Guardians,

In the wake of the news surrounding the coronavirus and our school closure, the counseling office acknowledges that feeling anxious and stressed in these rapidly changing times is normal. It is important that you take care of yourselves, and monitor your own physical and mental health. We understand that the news may feel overwhelming, but being mindful of yourself and others while working to maintain a balanced daily routine may help. Please refer to this link for a list of [resources regarding COVID-19 and social distancing](#). As a reminder, the [Bromfield school counseling website](#) includes helpful information including academic, college/career readiness and mental health resources. More specific counseling resources can also be found via the [school adjustment counselors tab](#). The [HES counseling website](#) offers suggestions for addressing anxiety and focusing on mindfulness. In the event of a mental health emergency, please call 911, go to your local emergency room or contact Community Health Link (Emergency Mental Health Services) at 1(800) 977-5555.

Of course, you can reach out to your counselor via email anytime with questions or concerns, and we will do our best to respond within a reasonable timeframe. Between 10:00 and 11:00 Monday through Thursday, counselors will hold “office hours” and be available to answer email. Emails outside of this window may take longer than typical to respond. In some instances, a student may require telecounseling via Zoom. Details of telecounseling are outlined below. We recognize the challenges and limitations of virtual/distance school counseling. Virtual counseling will be done with the same standards and adherence to ethics as school counselors working in traditional school settings ([ASCA](#)). In terms of confidentiality with telecounseling, please be aware of who is around you when you join a Google Hangout. Counselors will be sure to schedule telecounseling sessions in a private room, but students and families should be aware of unintended viewers when discussing confidential matters. The utilization of headphones can also be helpful in protecting confidentiality. We also acknowledge that tone and intended messages may be misread or misunderstood when engaging in virtual conversations. To this end, counselors would like to remind students that anything they say or share with their counselor is confidential unless we feel the student is in danger of hurting themselves or others. If we have any concerns or questions while engaging in virtual counseling, parents/guardians will be contacted.

Telecounseling will be available by appointment Monday - Thursday if you:

- Are feeling stressed
- Have previously communicated via email with your counselor
- Are struggling to find a balance at home

Students, and when necessary, families on behalf of your student, please feel free to reach out to your counselor to schedule a telecounseling session following the steps below:

1. Email your counselor
2. In your email, let them know your concerns and if applicable, what day/time you'd like to telecounsel.
3. Check your school email for a link or Google phone number to access the counseling sessions
4. Click the link and begin the counseling session

We look forward to continuing to work together and providing support for all students to reach their academic potential while addressing any personal or social needs. Stay well!

Sara Lamere <slamere@psharvard.org>

School Counselor grades 10 - 12, Department Leader

Drew Skrocki <dsrocki@psharvard.org>

School Counselor grades 10 - 12

Christine Reale <creale@psharvard.org>

School Counselor grades 6- 9, Adjustment Counselor 6-12

Susan Chlapowski <schlapowski@psharvard.org>

School Counselor grades 6- 9, Adjustment Counselor 6 - 12

Jessica Drennen <jdrennen@psharvard.org>

School Counselor grades K - 5

Sharon Schmidt <sschmidt@psharvard.org> TBS Counseling Administrative Assistant