



Elementary & Middle School Hot Topics 2019 Workshop Descriptions

- **The Art and Science of Having Difficult Conversations with Your Teen,** Patrick Nash, Assistant Principal Gibbons Middle School; Lisa Livens, Adjustment Counselor Gibbons Middle School

Stumped on the approach you should take to have that difficult conversation with your teen? Tired of your teen giving you a one word answer or storming out of the room when you approach them? Having trouble getting through to them on those heavy topics? Come join Pat Nash, GMS Assistant Principal and Lisa Livens, GMS Adjustment Counselor as they walk you through how to dissect any difficult conversation, give you clear steps to successfully navigate them and identify what can get in your way. (Target Audience: Grades 6-8 caregivers)

- **Chill Skills: Helping your Child to Manage Stress,** Dana Catarius, Fales School Counselor; Matt Travis, Fales School P.E. Teacher

Like adults, our kids struggle with stress too. School, peer relationships, lack of sleep, poor nutrition, stressors at home are just a few root causes. Whatever the cause there are ways to help support your child when they are feeling overwhelmed, anxious and stressed. Come join Dana and Matt as we explore ways for you to support and guide your child as they learn to understand the ways to successfully maintain mental well being. You will learn the 7 keys to supporting your child and leave with several resources to guide you on this essential journey of mental wellness! (Target Audience: Grades K-6 caregivers)

- **Food Matters! How to Create and Foster Healthy Relationships with Food,** Catherine Nourse, MPH, RDN, LD

Ever consider the connection between food, nutrition, and habits? Want to encourage your children to better connect to, and ultimately eat, foods that provide the nutrients for them to learn, grow and play? Do you desire to change the tone of “eat your vegetables”? Join me for a discussion about creating harmony between the wants and shoulds as we seek to end the food fights, and instead nurture the food conversation and healthful habits because, let’s face it...food matters! (Target Audience: Grades K-6 caregivers)

- **Mindfulness for Parents and Caregivers**, Chandra Leela Velpula, [Synergy Wellness Center](#)

As parents, we all know how millions of thoughts run through our minds all the time. Better usage of mind is very much needed in this tech world we are in that is ready to dump stuff on our mind if we are not mindful. Practicing mindfulness helps us to pay attention to what's happening in the moment, reject unnecessary thoughts, emotions and accept needed experiences and feelings without judgment. Some benefits of mindfulness meditation include reducing stress, increasing focus, and accepting our children and ourselves without judgment. In this workshop you will learn about the practice of mindfulness meditation, learn a few breathing techniques, and take part in a brief meditation. Begin to calm your mind, increase your inner strength and happiness. (Target Audience: Grades K-8 caregivers)

- **Social-Emotional Learning at School and Home**, Kim Tynan, WPS Clinical and Social Emotional Learning Coordinator; Kristen Vincent, Responsive Classroom Certified Consulting Teacher & WPS school committee member

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is the process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital for school, work, and life success. In the Westborough Public Schools, social-emotional learning is an important element of each student's school day. Learn how all students in grades K – 6 are experiencing SEL in their classrooms. We will share about Second Step and Responsive Classroom, two specific strategies used in WPS to teach and provide practice in essential SEL skills. We will also provide some strategies for how these skills can be reinforced at home. (Target Audience: Grades K – 6 caregivers)

- **Supporting Students with Dyslexia in the Westborough Public Schools K-6**, Elizabeth Berry, PK-3 Literacy Coordinator; Stephanie Nephew, 4-6 Literacy Coordinator; Megan O'Connell, Third Grade Teacher; Bridget Sullivan, School Psychologist

A panel of Westborough educators will present the latest research on dyslexia and how that research shapes the work we do in our schools. We'll discuss assessment tools for early detection, instructional implications within K-6 classrooms, and share resources for families. (Target Audience: Grades K-6 caregivers)

- **Understanding Children's Behavior to Prevent and Respond to Conflicts**, Maura Kovaleski, Assistant Principal Mill Pond School

Do you want to better understand why your child says and does some things? Are you wondering how to prevent and manage conflicts with your child and avoid power struggles? If so, this practical workshop is for you. In this workshop you will learn about the five basic needs

that we all have, which drive our behavior. You will learn how thoughts impact feelings, which impact behavior/choices. You will learn strategies and tools that you can implement immediately with your child/children that will lead to a deeper understanding of them. You will also explore the philosophy “Children Do Well If They Can” by Dr. Ross Greene, which I have personally tweaked to People Do Well If They Can. (Target Audience: Grades K-8 caregivers)

- **Youth Behavior Risk Survey: What do We Really Know About Our Kids?**, Roger Anderson, WPS Director Wellness & Physical Education; Chip Dapolite, WPS Resource Officer; Westborough Police Chief Jeff Lourie

*What do we really know about our students? As a part of a grant through the Metrowest Health Care Foundation, all of our students in grades 7-12 complete the Metrowest Adolescent Health Survey every two years. New data from our students just last fall on the topics of substance abuse, mental health, bullying, violence, risky behaviors and protective factors will all be presented. Come hear what we know, what it means, and what we’re doing about it in our schools and our community. (Target Audience: Grades **6-8** caregivers)*