

Mercy High School
Counseling Department

GOOD NEWS

October 2020



A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

October 2020

Mercy High School Counseling Department

Good News

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EVEN IN THE
DARKEST TIMES,
EVEN WHEN YOU
CAN'T SEE IT, THINGS
ARE STILL GROWING.

MAYBE YOU ARE
GROWING, TOO.

@POSITIVELYPRESENT



Important Dates

October 1st-9th: Spirit Week continued!

October 1st & 2nd : Club Meeting Days

October 7th, 14th, 21st, & 28th: Senior College App Drop-In sessions

October 7th : 9th grade Monthly Meet Up with Link Leaders

October 21st: 9th Grade Diversity Retreat 10am-12:00pm,
Parent/Teacher Conferences

October 21st-23rd : No School



Google image search:

quokkas

You're welcome.

THIS IS DUMB.

Yeah, I said it. This is dumb.

My friend's elementary school aged child had a really rough week with remote learning. Issues with connectivity; Zoom drops; classmates not taking things seriously; at-home distractions; not being able to hear the teacher; missing friends; staring at an iPad screen for way too long....all of these frustrating elements of remote learning became too much for this child, which resulted in them screaming: **“THIS IS DUMB!”**

He's not wrong.

It is dumb that students can only be with half of their classmates and only be in this building 2 days a week. Wearing masks for 7 hours a day is dumb. One-way hallways are dumb and eating at your 4th hour desk is dumb.

It is dumb that our Teachers have to sanitize every surface in between every class. Zoom is dumb. Teaching to 2 “classrooms” each class period is dumb. Not seeing Advisees in person is dumb.

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It is dumb that parents have to pay tuition for students to be in our building only 2 days a week right now. Parents also bought their students uniforms that are only being worn 2 days a week right now-that's pretty dumb.

It is dumb that I cannot see but a third of my student's faces while I counsel them. A student really needed a hug the other day and I had to decline-that was really dumb.

Cancelled events; virtual everything; limitations; always needing a "plan B"...it's all dumb, yes, **and** all of these dumb things are absolutely necessary to successfully navigate our current reality.

So, here is how I am approaching these dumb situations each time my frustration peaks (feel free to borrow):

1. Vent a little. Tell someone how dumb this all is.
(Not constantly, not daily, just enough to unload. Set a time limit.)
2. Assess what is going well or working, and what is not.
(Maybe make a list. I love lists.)
3. Get creative with making change or coming up with solutions.
(Try doing things a different way! When my creativity or energy runs out, I seek out resources-Have you reached out to a Teacher? Counselor? Are there students around you who are finding success? Ask them how!)

To help you out, the next couple of pages contain some tips from one of my favorite resources; Mercy Link Leaders. Link Leaders are Juniors and Seniors, so they have experience, and Mercy Link Crew strives to provide mentors with varying backgrounds, interests, course loads, extracurricular resumes, and personalities. There is likely a Link Leader who can relate to what you are experiencing and there is definitely a Link Leader who would be willing to help you out.

Setting up for success

remote learning via zoom

when we are ZOOMIES
instead of ROOMIES

in person learning

Remote learning can be extremely challenging. There is much that is completely out of the student's control (ahem...technology for example) in our current situation. Fortunately, there is also quite a bit that is within your control as a student. There are choices and changes that you can make to set yourself up for success!

So, as you continue to navigate the remote learning piece of our current reality, here are some tips to help you out, provided by some 2020-2021 Mercy Link Leaders.

Don't attend class in your bed all day-change your location to be most productive.

*Have a question? Ask it. Can't hear the teacher? Let them know.
You have to ask for what you need.*

Try to answer the Teacher's questions-this will help you pay attention and it will get rid of awkward silence.

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Create a word doc with all of your Zoom Links for each class in one place, in order of your schedule!!!

Set alarms for 1-2 minutes before the start of class. This will help you make sure that you are on time.

Try your best to avoid or get rid of distractions. Silence your phone, turn off notifications, and ask your family to leave you alone.

Wake up at least 30 minutes before your first class. It helps you to feel awake and alert and pay better attention.

If remote days stress you out, talk to your Counselor to vent and learn about ways to destress.

Have the class start/stop times somewhere near you at all times to avoid tardies.

Drink a lot of water and don't skip lunch!

Participate.

Stay organized-use a planner or planner app, reminders, alarms, post-its, signs...whatever it takes.

Build a relationship with your Teachers so that you don't feel disconnected from them when you're going to class at home.

Written by Mercy Counselor, Mrs. Trish Brown

October IS COLLEGE MONTH

Here is what students can look forward to this month, as Mercy's Counseling Department strives to promote an informed, collegebound culture!

COLLEGE TRIVIA-Each Monday and Thursday in October, a College Trivia question will be sent to all students via email, with an opportunity to answer via Google Form. Each Tuesday and Friday, answers will be shared. We will also pull random entries from each question and those staff and students pulled will win a choice of prizes from our college swag box! (You must submit correct answer to be eligible for drawing)

COLLEGE APP DROP-IN SESSIONS-Each Wednesday of the month, from 1-2pm, 2 Counselors will be available via zoom for drop-in college application help. Seniors can bring specific questions, ask for help on essays, or just check in on overall application progress! Zoom links will be shared Wednesday mornings, via Schoology.

HBCU Virtual Experience-School Counselor, Rakiba Mitchell has developed a virtual experience for students interested in learning more about Historically Black Colleges and Universities! This will be shared via Schoology on October 1st.

STAFF SPIRIT -On October 16th (KC) and 17th (SF), Mercy Staff will be wearing College Gear to represent the schools we have attended. Students are encouraged to ask about our alma mater, so to learn more about these schools and the college experiences of our Staff!

Written by Mercy Counselor, Mrs. Holly Bennetts

Take a Moment for Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the simple practice of being totally present in the moment; being aware of your surroundings, your breath, your thoughts, and your feelings.

Mindfulness activities can be calming and destressing, can reduce anxiety, can improve your focus, and can contribute to improved physical and mental health.

The more you practice mindfulness activities,
the more benefits you will find!

Mindfulness and Attention

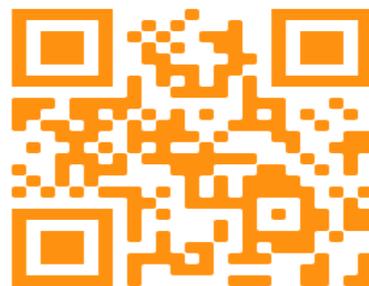
There are 3 pieces to a full mindfulness practice: Attention, Intention, & Attitude. First, let's focus on **attention**.

Tapping into and improving our attention can be accomplished by beginning a journey with **meditation**. Meditation can take so many forms-the trick is finding the form that quiets your mind and trying meditation several times before writing it off.

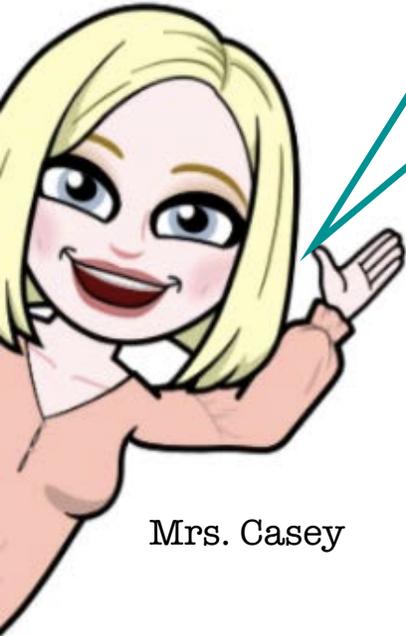
This is not something that works immediately, which is why it is referred to as a *practice*.

If you're willing to
give it a try,
you can learn more here

→
(scan this QR code to be taken to an
intro video by *Headspace*)



This month's Mindful Moment activity was
provided by Mercy Counselor, Mrs. Trish Brown.



Mrs. Casey

“Hey Mercy!
If you missed it last
month, please check out
our new
Virtual Counseling Office!

It is an interactive
document. Just follow
the instructions and
click on the office
items for information!



Mrs. Hessler

You can find it in
the Counseling
Schoology courses



Mrs. Burek

“There you can find the
caseload and contact info
for each Counseling
Department member!



Mrs. Bennetts

“Our Virtual Office will also teach you
all about the student services we
provide, as well as how to schedule an
in-person or E-Counseling
appointment with a Counselor!”



Mrs. Brown

COLLEGE CORNER

MAKING THE PURSUIT OF YOUR COLLEGE DREAMS NOT SO MUCH OF A NIGHTMARE

Mercy's Counseling Department recently finished meeting individually with our seniors. This meeting was a follow up to the College Application Meeting via zoom on Wednesday August 26. The zoom meeting was mandatory so if a senior was not able to participate, the video can be found in Schoology with all the pertinent information. The individual check-in meetings are a good way for seniors to touch base with their counselor about where they are in the application process. Some seniors that came in to see us were just beginning to look at applications and what their colleges want while others were almost done with the the application process. I have been telling my seniors, you are where you are in this process. No senior should feel behind! We talked to students about the Common Application, school specific applications, Essays, Teacher letters of recommendation, adding colleges to SCOIR, moving them to the applying column and ACT/SAT test scores. Seniors came in with some great questions and left their counselor meeting with a To-Do List of next steps that they should be working on. For added support, take a look at the 20-21 College Application Checklist. It's found under My Drive in SCOIR. This sheet can be used to check off the tasks needed to complete college applications. If you like to check things off a list as much as I do, then this checklist is for you.

Please remember, in order to have transcripts sent, the following 3 forms must be filled out;

1. Consent to Release Records for College Applications
2. Counselor Letter of Recommendation Request Form
3. Once those two forms are complete, you must fill out the survey confirming that you completed the first two forms. It is called, I have completed my Consent to Release Records and my Counselor Recommendation Surveys.

All forms are found in SCOIR. Once these forms are complete, your counselor will know to send out transcripts and other information such as a letter of recommendation and secondary school reports on behalf of the student.

Please know that we are here to continue to help seniors in the College Application Process. We are available during the school day as well as before and after school. Keep up the good work, seniors!

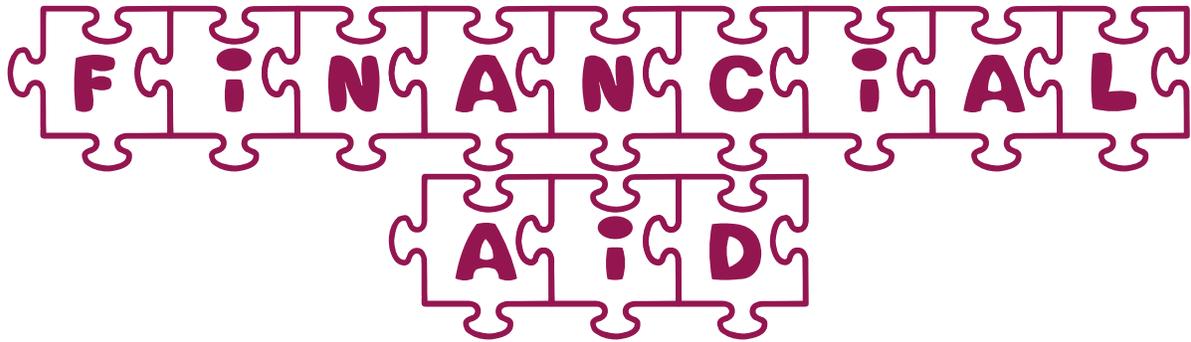
Written by Mercy Counselor, Mrs. Arpna Hessler

did you know...

If you are interested in applying to
Historically Black Colleges & Universities,
The Common Black Common App
allows students to apply to 58 HBCUs with ease.

[Learn more here.](#)

FOCUSING ON



When we talk about college fit for a student we are usually talking about academics, social and financial fit. This month, our college information is going to focus on the Financial Fit piece. While a majority of this article will focus on senior families, there are also resources available for our 9th-11th grade families. Going Merry, our scholarship platform, has a [wonderful resource](#) section regarding the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the various types of aid available for students, and defines terms like COA (Cost of Attendance) and EFC (Expected Family Contribution). It's a great place for any parent to get an understanding of financial aid. The step-by-step FAFSA guide is an excellent overview for senior parents as we begin financial aid month.

12th Grade Students

- [The FAFSA \(Free Application for Federal Student Aid\)](#) is made available on October 1st. The parent/guardian will have to complete the bulk of this application, students will need to sign the electronic form. The FAFSA will provide an Expected Family Contribution (EFC) based on the 2019 tax return. Colleges will use this information to see if the student qualifies for need based aid. If your 2019 tax return is not representative of your current financial situation, the parent should reach out to the financial aid office after your student has received an acceptance to the school to inquire about the process for updating financial records. The goal is to complete this form by the end of 2020, but no later than mid-February.
- [Some colleges](#) require you to complete [the CSS profile](#). This profile asks more in-depth questions regarding your family finances and may be used to determine institutional need-based aid.

- Students and parents should have a realistic talk about family finances and college this month. Be concrete and specific. It is advised not to use terms like “We can figure it out” if this is not realistic. Specifics help a student plan a college list and it helps the student understand what type of outside scholarships they may need to apply for.
- If a Going Merry Account was not created in the junior year, students can create their account by clicking this [link](#). Going Merry curates scholarships based on scholarship type and requirements, think of it as the Common App for scholarships. One application may go to several scholarships.

11th Grade Students

- Add to the document listed for 9th grade students
- Create your Going Merry Scholarship Account and begin filling out information. Students can create their account by clicking this [link](#). Going Merry curates scholarships based on scholarship type and requirements, think of it as the Common App for scholarships. One application may go to several scholarships. There will be Scholarships that start to become available to you as we move into the spring semester and the summer.
- As you start to build a college list, don’t neglect the financial part of the discussion.

10th Grade Students

Create or continue the 9th grade document outline on the next page.

9th Grade students

Create a Google Doc (or print the next page!) of the activities you are doing this year. They can be Mercy activities, Church Activities, Volunteer Work, or outside clubs. Basically answering the question, “when I am not studying or in school I am doing....” A simple note of what you are doing, the time you spend and why you are doing the activity.

My Activities

Activity	Grade	What I do?	How Often?	Why do I do it?
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Financial Aid Resources

Salve Regina University is hosting a free Financial Aid workshop on October 22nd at 7:00pm. Please pre-register [here](#)

Alma College Also has a playlist of short Financial Aid videos [here](#)

Ohio Wesleyan University has a Financial Aid Process series, starting October 7th. Pre-register [here](#).

VIRTUAL COLLEGE REP VISITS

**29 Colleges and Universities
are signed up to meet virtually with
Mercy students in October!!**

**Sign into SCOIR today, to check out
the calendar and sign-up!**



Image used with permission by artist, Dani DiPirro

JUST IN CASE
YOU NEED THIS TODAY:

You are loved.

YOU ARE NOT A FAILURE.

YOU ARE NOT A WASTE OF SPACE.

You are wanted.

I Believe in YOU.

YOU CAN DO IT!

JUST IN CASE
YOU OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE NEEDS THIS:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1800-273-8255

Okay2Say:

okay2say.state.mi.us

To Write Love on Her Arms:

twloha.com