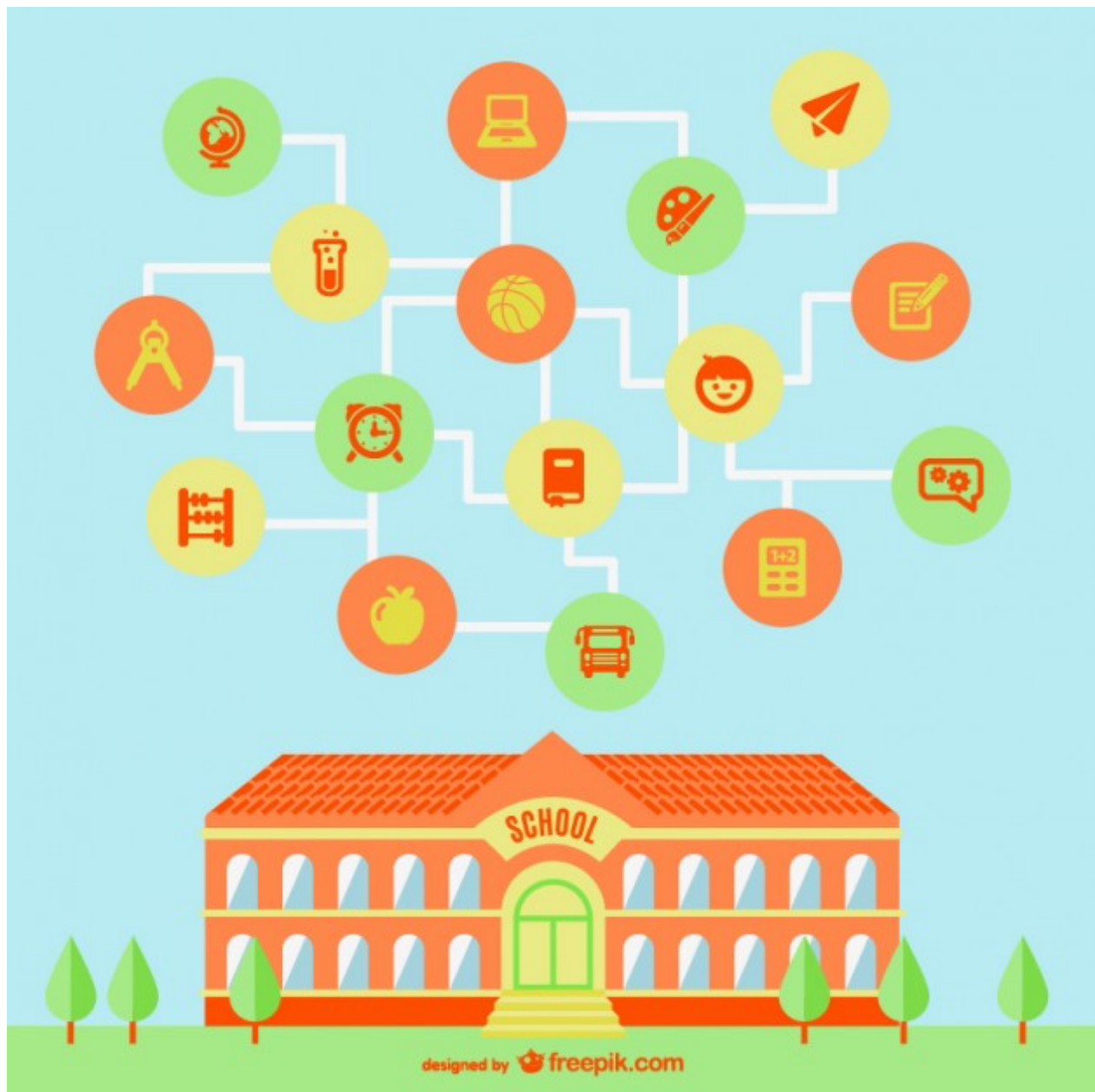


A Self-Care Guide For School Staff

Published by the North Thurston Education Association
for NTEA, NTPA, NTAOTE and NTIA



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To All Our Colleagues:

This guide is an effort of the district's Department of Student and Staff Support, Human Resources and the North Thurston Education Association. The intent is to provide all staff with a set of resources that will enhance wellness, reduce stress and maximize each person's ability to do the very hard and necessary work of helping our students learn.

At no other time have so many responsibilities been placed on those who will work in schools for both student academic achievement and for student social competence. Your work each day is extremely challenging, often overwhelming and many times rewarding. North Thurston Public Schools appreciate deeply the efforts that are made on behalf of students and their families by each employee of the district. This publication is to help you help yourself stay healthy and engaged with the very important work that you do.

The Department of Student and Staff Support welcomes your comments and/or suggestions on the Self-Care Guide. Please call us at 360-412-4466. We look forward to establishing fruitful relationships with all district personnel striving to ensure the education and health of our students.

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Ten Steps to Relieve Your Stress

1. Identify the Stressors in Your School and in Your Home

Take the time to define what particular areas of work and nonwork settings produce the most stress and anxiety for you. Think about where you feel most out of control, with whom you might have the greatest difficulty communicating, what time of day makes you most vulnerable to criticism or feeling badly about yourself, and when a combination of factors makes your coping most difficult. Controlling stress is impossible unless you define what its sources are.

2. Use Positive Self-Talk to Put Things in Perspective

This is when talking to yourself can be truly productive! If things aren't going well and you begin to feel overwhelmed, a serious talk with yourself can often reframe the situation and make you better able to cope. Instead of whispering, "Boy, I really messed up on this one," you might try muttering to yourself, "Things will surely get better. I'm doing the very best I can. Now, what should I be doing differently to improve the situation?" Hearing encouraging words from others is only a temporary fix; the most lasting reinforcement is when such words come from within you.

3. Learn and Practice Stress-Management Techniques

Try visualization and put yourself any place but where you might be when you feel particularly stressed. Do deep breathing and try to focus merely on your breaths going in and out, if even for five minutes. Withdraw from the situation or setting for a few moments physically, and close your eyes while you focus on something you enjoy thinking about. There are many tactics for managing stress, but none will come to mind when you need them unless you practice them!

4. Build a Stress Resistance Reserve

Some days are really better than others. When things are going well, you need to stockpile, preferably in writing, why you had such a productive day and what tools you might draw upon in the future, when inevitably, things won't go as well. Make sure that you have enough food, rest, and healthy relationships to add to your stress resistance account so you are better able to deal with demands when they appear.

5. Recognize That the Past History of Relationships Cannot Be Erased

This doesn't mean to forgive and forget all those with whom you might have had some conflict in the past. However, it does mean that although such unpleasant episodes might color your perception of those with whom you must work and live, you should not let that prevent you from continuing relationships with others and from working on those in which you may have been unsuccessful previously. Move

on and don't dwell on past encounters – prepare yourself to have more positive future ones.

6. Set Realistic Goals for Yourself

Make sure that what you want to accomplish can actually be done in the amount of time you have, with the number of resources available to you. There is nothing more self-defeating and stress-inducing than setting yourself up for failure by establishing goals that are impossible to achieve.

7. Place Daily Events in an Appropriate Context

We have all had our most embarrassing moments when we wish the floor would open up and swallow us whole. At the end of each day, do a little accounting exercise and find something good that happened to balance what was not so good. In most instances, time will make events fade and taking a particularly horrible episode out of context will make it much more stress inducing.

8. Take One Day at a Time

Looking ahead can be devastating even to those with enormous stress-resistance reserves. Try to focus on the immediate day, hour, even minute, if necessary, and don't be diverted by worrying about what might happen in the future. Concentrate on the now!

9. Be Kind to Yourself

Cut yourself some slack, go shopping, or buy an ice cream cone, or curl up with a good book, even if you do have forty other "more important" things to do. Treating yourself can go a long way to adding to your stress-resisting capacity.

10. Keep Your Sense of Humor

It is easy to forget to laugh. No matter how bleak things appear, research has documented that those able to laugh and to joke survive stress with far less negative effects on their body and their minds. Remember to smile even though you may not want to; it often leads to laughter!

Self-Care Activities

1. Get Enough Rest!

This means a minimum of seven to eight hours of sleep a night. Trying to catch up on weekends or holidays does not work, nor does napping. Some people are able to nap for short periods during lunch or a break and awaken refreshed. This is often difficult for most individuals, however, but a good night's sleep is imperative.

2. Eat a Balanced Diet

What does this mean? We have been besieged with diets of every description and weight loss schemes that often just mean a temporary loss of pounds. Work every day on eating regular meals and at least one snack. Don't skip breakfast because you don't have time, or lunch because you have other things to do. That usually leads to binge eating later in the day or evening. Pack your lunch so you have it with you. Make a quick and nourishing breakfast drink in the blender. Plan in advance so you take in enough calories and make sure that these are high in complex carbohydrates and low in fat and sugar.

3. Establish a Way to Exercise Daily

Find a friend willing to exercise with you. Make an after dinner walk or early morning run a priority in your life. Join a health club or invest in exercise equipment to use at home. The release of endorphins associated with physical exercise has been demonstrated to produce a powerful sense of well-being in those who exercise regularly.

4. Give Yourself Some Personal Time

Make sure you have time set aside just for you or for what you specifically enjoy. Whether that means a long, hot bath or a one-hour horseback ride, make the effort to carve out a place in your week dedicated to you and you alone.

5. Strive for Laughter

Laugh and smile; joke and tell funny stories; listen to others and enjoy their humor. Part of everyday should be filled with joy. Strive to put the "fun" back into dysfunctional!

6. Change the Scene

Working and living in the same place year after year can become boring and lack stimulation. Take time to get away if only for an afternoon to someplace new or as yet unexplored, and take someone with you to enjoy it even more.

7. Establish a Network of Friends

Friends of all ages are a critical component of how we view ourselves and how others view us. Establishing a network of relationships, which will support and sustain you is time well spent. In turn, by giving to others, you will be adding to your stress-resisting reserve, for those friendships will nurture you when you need them most.

8. Ask for Help

Don't be afraid to seek help if you need it – for anything. There is always someone willing to listen and to respond to you if only they know you need some assistance.

9. Hang on To Your Hobbies or Get Some

Take up collecting stamps or birdhouses, or begin sewing or quilting. Make wood furniture, work on old cars, clip recipes, and grow beautiful flowers. Do whatever it takes to devote yourself to a particular area of interest and get more proficient in it.

10. Treat Yourself

Buy yourself that one extravagant item you have been lusting after. Make yourself a special dessert. Soak for an hour in a friend's hot tub. You deserve it!

11. Practice Positive Imagery

In your mind's eye, things should always work out great! Imagine the very best outcome to a situation – give yourself that position or raise. Thinking positively helps you act and feel positive, and that alone has an enormous impact on shaping how things truly turn out.

12. Learn and Use Relaxation Techniques

Whether you try yoga, breathing exercises, or visualization, relaxation tactics can be of enormous help to you in trying to establish or re-establish a sense of control and equilibrium.

13. Work on Your Religious Faith

Too often we don't take the time to think about a higher power and the meaning of spiritual well-being. Efforts to do this do not require joining a specific church or religion, but do necessitate your willingness to explore this aspect of your mind.

14. Consider Massage Therapy

Now an accepted modality for treating stress-related illness and injuries of all kinds, massage therapy can be a rewarding and relaxing interlude in a busy week of work and home. Try short massages first and work your way up to a full body

massage, or just have your neck and shoulders worked on – untying knots in muscles seem to untangle thoughts as well.

15. See Your Physician for a Check Up

Too often people neglect to get regular checkups. Simple physical maladies may be corrected through medical intervention and give you more energy for work and home. Your health care providers can be a wonderful resource for your physical and emotional well-being. Use them!

16. Look into Support Groups or Other Services

For some people, talking about issues or worries with others who share similar problems is helpful and necessary. There are numerous support groups and associated services in every community. Newspapers, social service offices, hospitals, and counseling centers are good resources for finding out about available groups and services.

17. Give Yourself Permission to Grieve

Take the time to ponder your losses and to grieve over those. In turn, make sure you celebrate your successes and share these with others.

18. Put Things in Perspective

Abraham Lincoln once said, “Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.” Don’t let adversity get you down. Try to work on reframing situations so they can be resolved instead of letting them diminish you. One failure to reach a student or a colleague does not establish a pattern. Instead view it as an opportunity to learn how to be more effective the next time!

Alcohol / Drugs / Tobacco

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (AA)

866-972-6134

Referral and support for people seeking recovery from alcohol abuse.

AL-ANON AND ALATEEN

wa-al-anon.org

For family members of adult alcoholics. A support and resource group.

ALTERNATIVES PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING

360-357-7986

Substance abuse/chemical dependency treatment for adults, families, and adolescents.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RESOURCES

360-704-7170

Outpatient individual counseling and group therapy for chemically dependent adults and adolescents.

CRISIS CLINIC

crisis-clinic.org

360-586-2800

24-hour anonymous and confidential crisis intervention and referral for anyone who is using or abusing substances or is affected by a user.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

360-754-4433

Support in becoming and staying free from drug dependence.

PROVIDENCE ST. PETER CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY CENTER

360-456-7575

Assessment, information and treatment of chemical dependency for adults and adolescents over the age of 12.

THE RIGHT STEP

360-923-9585

Assessment and treatment for youth with chemical dependency problems.

THURSTON --TOGETHER!

360-493-2230

Health promotion, youth development and preventative initiatives.

Educational Opportunities

COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT

islonline.org

Learning opportunities and cultural expansion for volunteers while improving living conditions in underserved communities around the world.

SAINT MARTIN'S COLLEGE

360-491-4700

Undergraduate and graduate degrees in liberal arts, education and related fields. Opportunities to enroll in continuing education offerings for credit.

SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

360-754-7711

College technical and trades programs; continuing education; parenting skills; GED preparation, and personal development. Special interest coursework as well as liberal arts offerings. Programs for adults who wish to improve their skills in reading, writing, math, social studies, and science.

THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE

360-867-6000

Undergraduate and graduate degrees in liberal arts and education.

WORKFIRST

workfirst.wa.gov

877-501-2233

Designed to assist people experiencing career and life transitions. Skills in job searching, interviewing, resume building, and computer experience provided.

Health Care Resources

AIDS HOTLINE

hiv.org

800-448-0440

Information, referrals and pamphlets.

CAPITAL MEDICAL CENTER

multicare.org

360-754-5858

Both in-patient and ambulatory care services. Multi-specialty groups of physicians and other health care providers available for care across the lifespan.

SEA MAR DENTAL CLINIC

360-570-8016

Family practice physicians and nurse practitioners provide primary health care for the entire family; people with all levels of income are accepted.

MEDIC ONE

non-emergency

360-704-2780

Emergency medical service to provide pre-hospital and advanced life support to persons experiencing life threatening medical emergencies.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD – Olympia Health Center

360-769-0045

Women's health care, family planning, pregnancy-testing referral. Sexually transmitted diseases (STD) testing. HIV/AIDS testing for males and females.

THURSTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.

360-867-2500

Immunizations, HIV/AIDS consultation, family planning clinic, maternity support services, rural health services, sexually transmitted disease clinic, W.I.C. (Women, Infants & Children) supplemental food program.

WASHINGTON POISON CENTER

1-800-222-1222

Detailed information on potential poisoning and toxic exposures. Emergency instructions about what to do in case of poisoning or overdose.

Mental Health Options

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RESOURCES

360-704-7170

Mental health services including counseling, support services and chemical dependency.

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SERVICES COUNSELING PROGRAM

Ccsww.org

360-878-8248

Provides individual couple, family, parent/child and group counseling.

CRISIS CLINIC

360-586-2800

24-hour anonymous and confidential phone crisis intervention/ referral to more than 600 resources.

MONARCH CHILDRENS JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY CENTER

360-923-1884

Assistance and support for children of all ages who have been sexually abused. Both individual and group support options are available. Information for adults who have been sexually abused as children is also available.

SAFEPLACE safeplaceolympia.org 360-754-6300 (24-hour Crisis Line)

Aid to victims of sexual assault; help to women and children who have been physically, emotionally or sexually abused by someone close to them, and need to leave their homes. All services are free.

CRISIS RESOLUTION SERVICES

360-754-1338

Outreach for those experiencing mental health emergencies. Telephone intervention; face-to-face assistance; referral and follow-up services.

WASHINGTON ALLIANCE FOR THE MENTALLY ILL (NAMI Washington)

namiwa.org

206-783-4288

Support and advocacy for severely, mentally ill individuals and their families. Educational forums monthly; information and referral 24 hours a day.

Family / Parenting Support

CHILD CARE ACTION COUNCIL

360-786-8907

Parent consultation on choosing quality childcare centers and homes. Referrals to licensed childcare providers. Also, assistance to parents of children with special needs.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES – YMCA

360-754-9297 (Olympia)

360-753-6576 (Briggs)

Before and after school child care at over 30 elementary school sites. Financial assistance is available. Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and other state paid programs are accepted.

COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL

360-438-1100

Source of information on diverse resources in Thurston County.

FAMILY HELP LINE

1-800-932-4673

For any parent needing emotional support or resource information.

P-FLAG – PARENTS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS

pflag.org

360-866-0511 (Olympia Chapter)

Provides support, education, advocacy and opportunities for dialogue about sexual orientation. Support group for family members and friends of lesbian, gay, or bisexual individuals.

PARENT-TO-PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAM OF THURSTON COUNTY

360-352-1126

Emotional support and information to parents/guardians of children with disability or chronic illness; social/recreational events, resource library, newsletter, workshops, and seminars.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER OF THURSTON COUNTY

Mediatethurston.org

360-956-1155

Help with discussing and solving problems related to parenting children. Custody and visitations issues addressed.

Recreational Opportunities

LA FITNESS

360-339-6209

Fitness programs, racquetball, swimming and weight training.

PLANET FITNESS

360-339-5188

Circuit training, personal training, cardiovascular equipment.

HARLEQUIN PRODUCTIONS

360-786-0151

Opportunities for acting, stage production

JOHANSEN OLYMPIA DANCE CENTER

360-943-8011

Jazz dancing, modern dance, all levels of ballet and tap classes.

LACEY PARKS AND RECREATION

360-491-0857

Offers swimming lessons, tours, cultural, sports, outdoor and fitness activities for ages infant through adult.

OLYMPIA LITTLE THEATER

360-786-9484

Theater production and stage work opportunities.

CITY OF OLYMPIA PARKS, ARTS & RECREATION

360-753-8380

Over 100 classes and activities for infants through adult, including art enrichment, exercise, tours and outdoor events.

THURSTON COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION

360-786-5595

Recreation, education and outdoor activities with programs serving physically and developmentally disabled persons.

TUMWATER PARKS AND RECREATION

360-754-4160

Recreational and educational programs, activities and events for children and adults.

TUMWATER VALLEY GOLF LUB

360-943-9500

Grass driving range; chipping and putting greens; private and group lessons.

VALLEY ATHLETIC CLUB

360-352-3400

Swimming, exercise facilities, indoor and outdoor tennis courts, personal fitness program and trainers.

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS & RECREATION

360-902-8500

All kinds of instruction in boating; resource for information on marine activities in Puget Sound.

WESTSIDE LANES

360-943-2400

Offers open bowling, party rooms, video games, a bar and lounge, leagues all year round for all ages and groups.

YMCA: SOUTH SOUND

Olympia 360-753-6576

Briggs 360-753-6576

Activities for ages infant through senior citizens including swimming, clubs, fitness, sports and parent education.

WASHINGTON CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

360-753-8585

A variety of live performances are presented seasonally in a big arts center with vaudeville roots.

WET SCIENCE CENTER

360-664-2333

Hands on activities teaching kids about the water cycle & water's vital impact on life on earth.

HANDS ON CHILDRENS MUSEUM

360-956-0818

Center offering participatory exhibits & programs on art & science for kids.

BIGELOW HOUSE MUSEUM

olympiahistory.org

The oldest residence in Olympia and one of the earliest still standing in the Pacific Northwest. Bigelow House is fully open as a museum, hosting school tours, tourists, researchers, and events.

RISK FACTORS FOR DEPRESSION:

- Prior episodes of depression
- Female gender
- Family history of depressive disorder
- Prior suicide attempts
- Age of onset under 40
- Medical conditions that are chronic in nature
- Postpartum period
- Lack of social support
- Stressful life situations
- Current abuse of alcohol or drugs

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION:

- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Inability to sleep or sleeping for longer periods each day
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicidal ideation
- Stubborn resistance to the suggestions, orders or instructions of others
- Persistent sadness or frequent crying
- Self-deprecating, guilty or self-blaming comments
- Expressions of hopelessness
- Decreased attentiveness to one's physical appearance or to one's tasks
- Decreased energy
- Change in sexual interest and activity

There is no one cause of depression. Although researchers have found that depression tends to run in families, some type of chemical imbalance is often present. Neurotransmitters are substances found in the brain, which allow brain cells to communicate with others. In depression, there is a deficiency in these chemicals, which causes irritability, anxiety, fatigue and insomnia. Often major losses or stressors precipitate a depressive illness.

Today, medications are utilized with great success at treating the underlying chemical imbalance often associated with depressive illness. These medications do not solve the stressors or problems that might have precipitated the illness, but they do restore energy to the individual to deal with those issues. Medications can take from four to six weeks to have an effect and often have to be changed until the desired response is obtained. Psychotherapy is also recommended and a combination of both medication and counseling usually relieves the symptoms of depression in weeks.

Help for Your Students

Where Do I Go to Get Help with a Student?

What if a Student:	Resource
Has an obvious learning problem?	School Psych or Counselor
Has no money for food or clothing?	School Counselor or Interventionist or District's Homeless Liaison
Shows signs of abuse or neglect?	School Counselor, Interventionist or Principal
Acts out repeatedly in class?	Principal or Assistant Principal
Appears to be using drugs/alcohol?	Principal or Assistant Principal
Needs to see a health care provider?	School Nurse
Confides in you that she is pregnant?	School Nurse
Appears to be gaining or losing large amounts of weight?	School Nurse
Requires medication while at school?	School Nurse
Is threatened by another student?	Principal or Assistant Principal
Has a significant drop in grades?	School Counselor or Interventionist
Has personal hygiene problems?	School Nurse
Is increasingly withdrawn in classes?	School Counselor, Nurse, or Interventionist
Tells you the he/she has contemplated suicide?	School Counselor or Interventionist

Help For Yourself or a Colleague

Where Do I Go to Get Help for Myself or a Colleague?

What if you or a colleague:	Resource
Want to start an exercise program?	M.D. or Health Care Provider
Feel unable to cope with day-to-day work at school?	Principal or Health Care Provider
Have suffered a series of losses over several months?	School Nurse, Counselor or Interventionist for referral
Need a source of health care?	School Nurse for referral
Have gained or lost more than 10 pounds without trying in the last six months?	M.D. or Health Care Provider
Have become less accepting of co-workers and more irritable?	School Nurse, Counselor or Interventionist for referral
Are having trouble sleeping?	M.D. or Health Care Provider
Are overwhelmed with emotional or family problems?	Principal, School Nurse, Counselor or Interventionist
Have increasing problems with your own children's behaviors?	Pediatrician or Family Physician
Are drinking or taking larger doses of medications prescribed for pain or anxiety?	School Nurse, Counselor or Interventionist for referral
Are unable to laugh or joke?	School Nurse, Counselor or Interventionist for referral
Cannot plan for classes?	Principal or Asst. Principal
Need to take some time off?	Principal

WEA Chinook

Peer Support Program

WEA Chinook's Peer Support Program offers help to certificated and classified employees.

Does something this year have you tied in knots?

New grade level?

New job?

New school?

New subject?

New supervisor?

Classroom management?

Discipline?

Inclusion?

Organization?

Scheduling?

What can the Peer Support Program do for you?

- It is a self-referral program
- It provides confidential assistance
- It provides experienced mentors from other districts

For further information, call the WEA Chinook (360-943-1776) or see your local president for an application.

THE POWER OF APPLAUSE

Assemblies, school plays, recitals, graduations – growing up there were at least annual occasions for ovations. As an adult, I frequently give applause, sitting in audiences, pounding my hands noisily to show my support for singers, lecturers, writers, athletes, and actors. Yet my personal life seems curiously devoid of such tangible appreciation. And so, I miss out on generous encouragement and enthusiastic support.

In the interests of those of us who want praise, I've developed a scenario for such days: a day of two hands clapping. Here's how it might work.

I drive my children to school. As they collect their book bags, their extra tennis shoes, the book report that has already fallen in the mud, a team of mothers surrounds my car. "Great job of getting your kids to school on time," they say, applauding approvingly. A phalanx of teachers lines the school's front hallway, clapping for the kids: "Thanks for agreeing to come in for learning," they cheer.

At work, my associates give me a standing ovation when I arrive. "You are so responsible," they say. I bask in the praise.

At the end of the workday, I drag myself through the grocery store. As I leave, the checkers and sackers stop to give their approval. "Fabulous food gatherer," they say encouragingly.

Do I really want to cook dinner after I've been solving problems, talking on the telephone, managing meetings all day? Sure, because as I carry the food to the table, my family applauds. After the meal, before they clear the table (yes, it's fantasy, but so what?) they give me a standing ovation. No wonder I'm thumbing through back issues of Gourmet magazine.

Applause can boost us at the dry cleaner and the accountant's office. Why should the dentist's receptionist sit quietly behind her desk, giving me only a minimal nod when I arrive for my appointment? What if she stood up and cried, "Bravo! Congratulations on your commitment to dental hygiene!"

There could be applause stations on street corners and in office buildings. We'd take turns clapping for one another, acknowledging how wonderful we are. One day a month should be designated National Applause Day. On this day, we'd cheer and be cheered. We'd practice taking long, sweeping bows and saying, "Thank you, thank you," in lovely, gracious voices.

Perhaps we could even learn to clap for ourselves?

- Source: Shouse, D. (1995, May 1). "The Sound of Two Hands Clapping." Newsweek.