



A Parent/Guardian's Guide to Thriving in High School

DR. KAREN SCHWARTZ, LCSW
DR. JULIE LANCE, LCSW, RPT-S

Parenting a High Schooler may be the hardest phase yet!

- ▶ When do I step in and communicate with teachers?
- ▶ How much do I remind them and check up about schoolwork and homework?
- ▶ Who do I loop in if there are bigger concerns?
- ▶ What ARE bigger concerns at this age?
- ▶ When do I keep quiet and shrink into the background?



What are my responsibilities as a parent?

Supplies

- ▶ Food
- ▶ Clothing
- ▶ Shelter

Support

- ▶ Emotional Support & Encouragement
- ▶ Open Communication
- ▶ To Reach out if Support is Needed



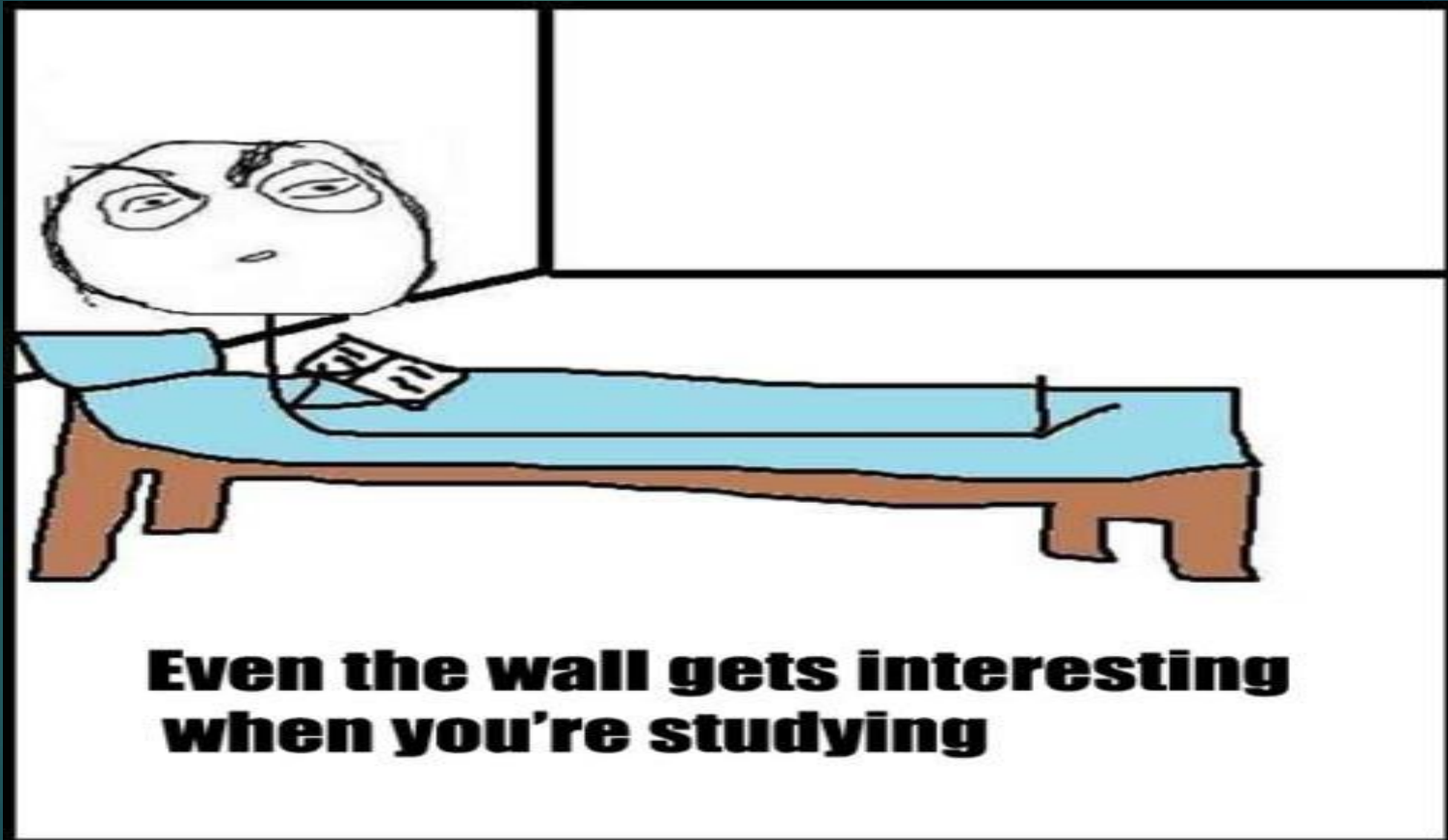
What are NOT your responsibilities?

- ▶ Attend School
- ▶ Do School & Homework
- ▶ Follow School Rules
- ▶ Make High School Friends
- ▶ Join Extracurriculars
- ▶ Make an Academic Plan to Graduate
- ▶ Plan for Life After High School



Parents: Provide a place to study

(IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A DESK)



TIME MANAGEMENT: Keys to Success

- ▶ Write their activities, appointments, and assignments into a planner so they can see it visually
- ▶ Help your child set priorities (school, extracurricular activities, free time, electronics, etc.)
- ▶ Encourage your child to estimate how long assignments & activities will take
- ▶ Help your child break down the activities/assignments so they are smaller and more manageable



Become a part of the school culture, environment, and activities

- ☑ Join PTSA
- ☑ Volunteer and/or serve as a board member for an extracurricular activity
- ☑ Volunteer for a committee
 - Front office help
 - School store
 - Copy help

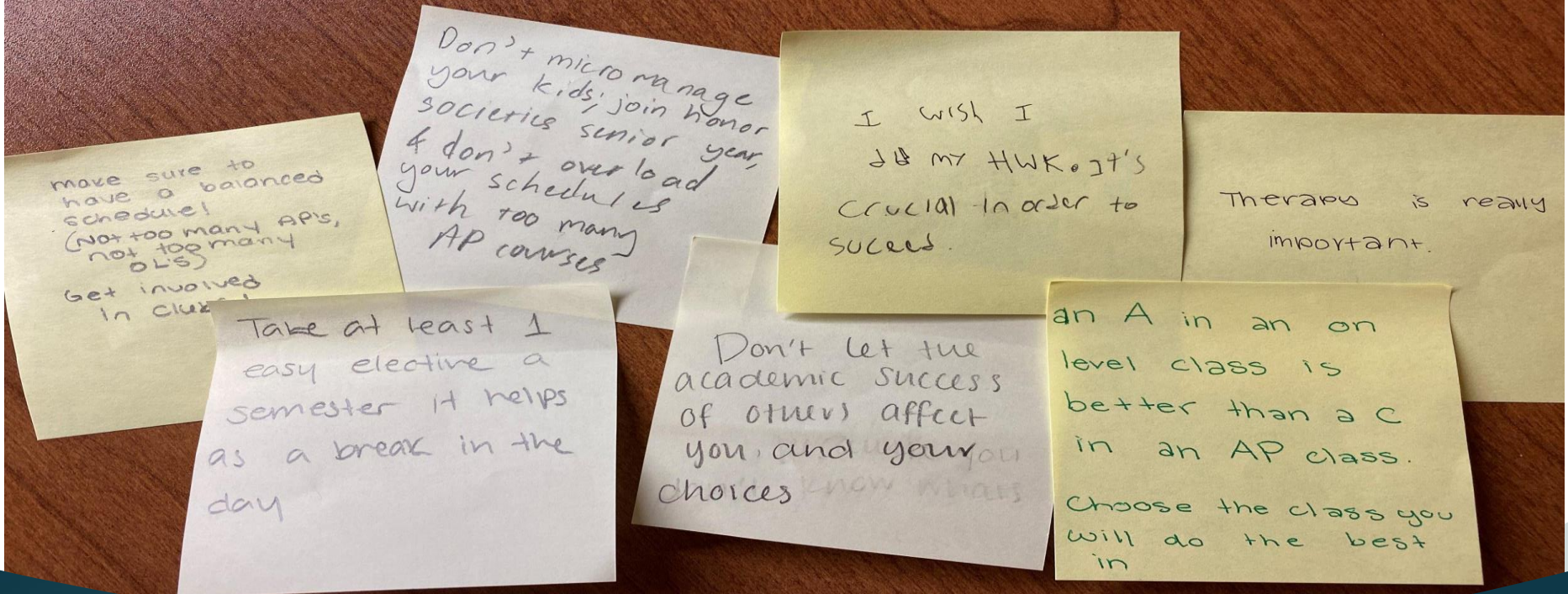


[Walton High School PTSA](#)

Encourage your high school student to be socially active

- ▶ Academic Clubs
- ▶ Social Clubs
- ▶ Community Service Clubs
- ▶ Hobbies
- ▶ Sports





make sure to have a balanced schedule!
(not too many AP's, not too many OLS)
Get involved in clubs!

Don't micro manage your kids; join honor societies senior year, & don't overload your schedules with too many AP courses

I wish I ↓ my HWK. It's crucial in order to succeed.

Therapy is really important.

Take at least 1 easy elective a semester it helps as a break in the day

Don't let the academic success of others affect you, and your choices

an A in an on level class is better than a C in an AP class.
Choose the class you will do the best in

Challenge, but don't over burden

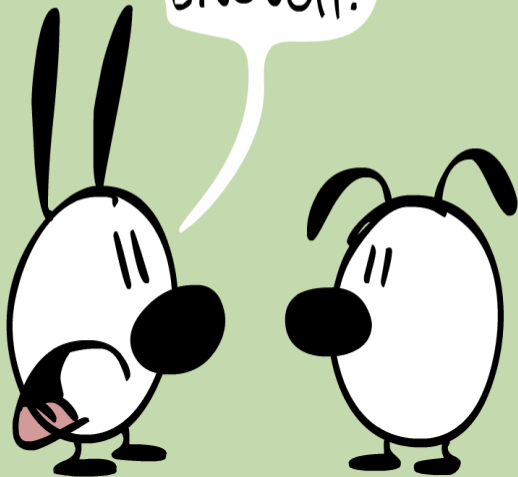
What Walton High School students want their parents to know

Sleep! Make
sure your child
gets enough



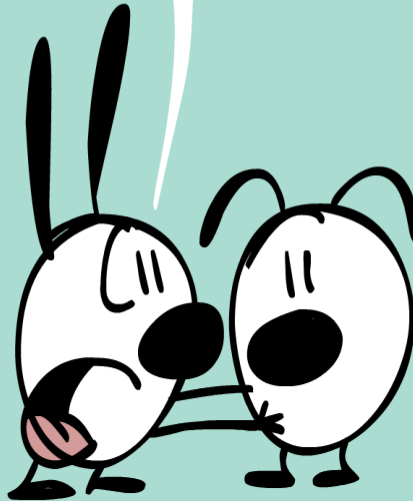
Set up Good Habits to Develop Independence

WHAT DO YOU MEAN
I'M NOT INDEPENDENT
ENOUGH?



mimiandeuice.com

SHOW ME HOW TO
BE INDEPENDENT!



I CAN'T BE
INDEPENDENT
WITHOUT YOUR
HELP!



Nurture the Parent-Child Relationship

- ▶ Keep family time a priority
- ▶ Spend one on one time as often as you can
 - ▶ Make it dependable time together
 - ▶ Create rituals to connect
 - ▶ Try something new together
 - ▶ Ask them to teach you something
- ▶ Go to every event you can, normalize you being there
- ▶ Remember their friend's names, interests & upcoming events – show them you are listening
- ▶ Tell them funny stories about your life as a teen
- ▶ Let them see you struggle, learn, and grow
- ▶ Seek their advice
 - ▶ “What would you recommend in order to...”



Your Parenting Role: Keep lines of communication open



Utilize a communication style of mutual respect, talking “with” them not “at” them

- ▶ Use conversation openers/open ended questions:
 - ▶ “Tell me about your day” vs. “How was your day”
 - ▶ “You seem worried about the project, what can I do to support you?”
- ▶ Use words that validate:
 - ▶ “No wonder you’re upset!”
 - ▶ “That would have hurt my feelings too”
 - ▶ “That must have been embarrassing, scary, annoying, etc...”
- ▶ Empathize instead of probing
 - ▶ “You seem sad”
 - ▶ “You’re very quiet tonight”

Let them finish their thought and not respond immediately

Celebrate WINS, Praise the EFFORT, and LEARN from the losses



Set Expectations AND Pick your Battles Wisely

I'm not saying I'm a parenting expert but letting your kids have ice cream for breakfast makes the morning more pleasant.

Sarcastic Mommy @sarcasticmommy4

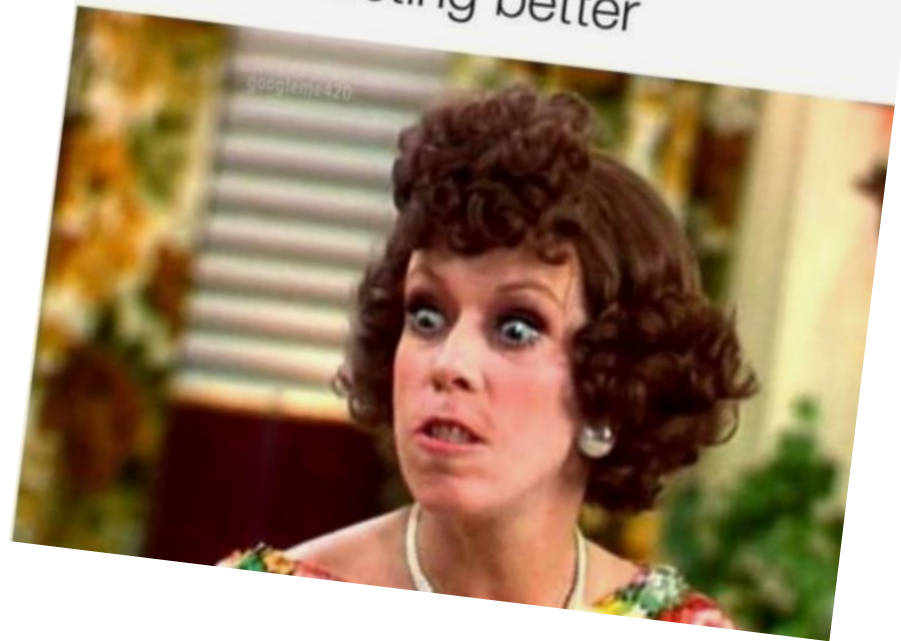
HOW TO DECIDE IF THIS IS A BATTLE WORTH PICKING

1. Ask yourself if this decision will truly matter in a week, a month, or a year.
2. Keep the thoughts child-focused. What will happen with your children if you do not pick this battle?
3. Consider the past. How have battles gone? Are they costly? Time-consuming? Do they get solved?
4. Is there a compromise instead of a battle?
5. Can you make this a decision instead of a battle?

What to do when they make mistakes...and they WILL make many!

- Use it as an opportunity to get closer
- Talk with them and listen
- Remember that behavior is communication
- Help them problem solve
- If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all
- Remember what it was like to be their age
- Don't try to rescue them

A large part of being a mom is staring at your kids like this until they start acting better



Buffering from life's ups and downs

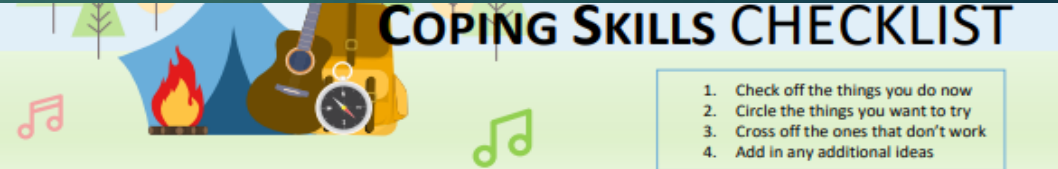
- Family Support
- Positive Friends
- Mentors
- Healthy Activities
- Generosity
- Spirituality
- Medical Access
- Mental Health



Protective Factors:
Sources of Strength Wheel

Managing Emotions: Develop a Coping Skills Checklist

- ✓ Check off the things you do now
- ✓ Circle the things you want to try
- ✓ Cross off the ones that don't work
- ✓ Add in any additional ideas



COPING SKILLS CHECKLIST

1. Check off the things you do now
2. Circle the things you want to try
3. Cross off the ones that don't work
4. Add in any additional ideas

RELAXATION SKILLS

- Deep breathing using finger tracing
- Deep breathing with bubbles/pinwheel
- Take a mindful walk
- Imagine your favorite place
- Think of your favorite things
- Picture the people you care about
- Make a fist and then release it
- Drink water
- Take a shower or bath
- Say the alphabet slowly
- Count backwards from 100
-
-

MOVEMENT SKILLS

- Squeeze something, use a fidget
- Shred paper
- Jump
- Go for a run/walk/swim
- Swing
- Play a sport
- Stretch
- Use a hammock
- Play freeze tag/Simon says
- Dance
-
-

DISTRACTION SKILLS

- Write/draw/color/paint
- Watch your favorite show
- Do a crossword, wordsearch, or puzzle
- Read
- Bake or cook
- Play with a pet
- Play a game
- Play/Call/Get together with a friend
-
-

PROCESSING SKILLS

- Write in a journal
- Write songs/music
- Talk to someone you trust
- Create a playlist
- Write a letter to someone
-
-

SENSORY SKILLS

- Use a weighted blanket
- Play with play doh, sand, shaving cream, slime
- Finger paint
- Eat a crunchy snack
- Bake cookies
- Whistle
- Play with scented dough
- Look at glitter sensory bottles
- Play I Spy
- Sing/Listen to music
- Mindful eating
- Use 54321 strategy
-

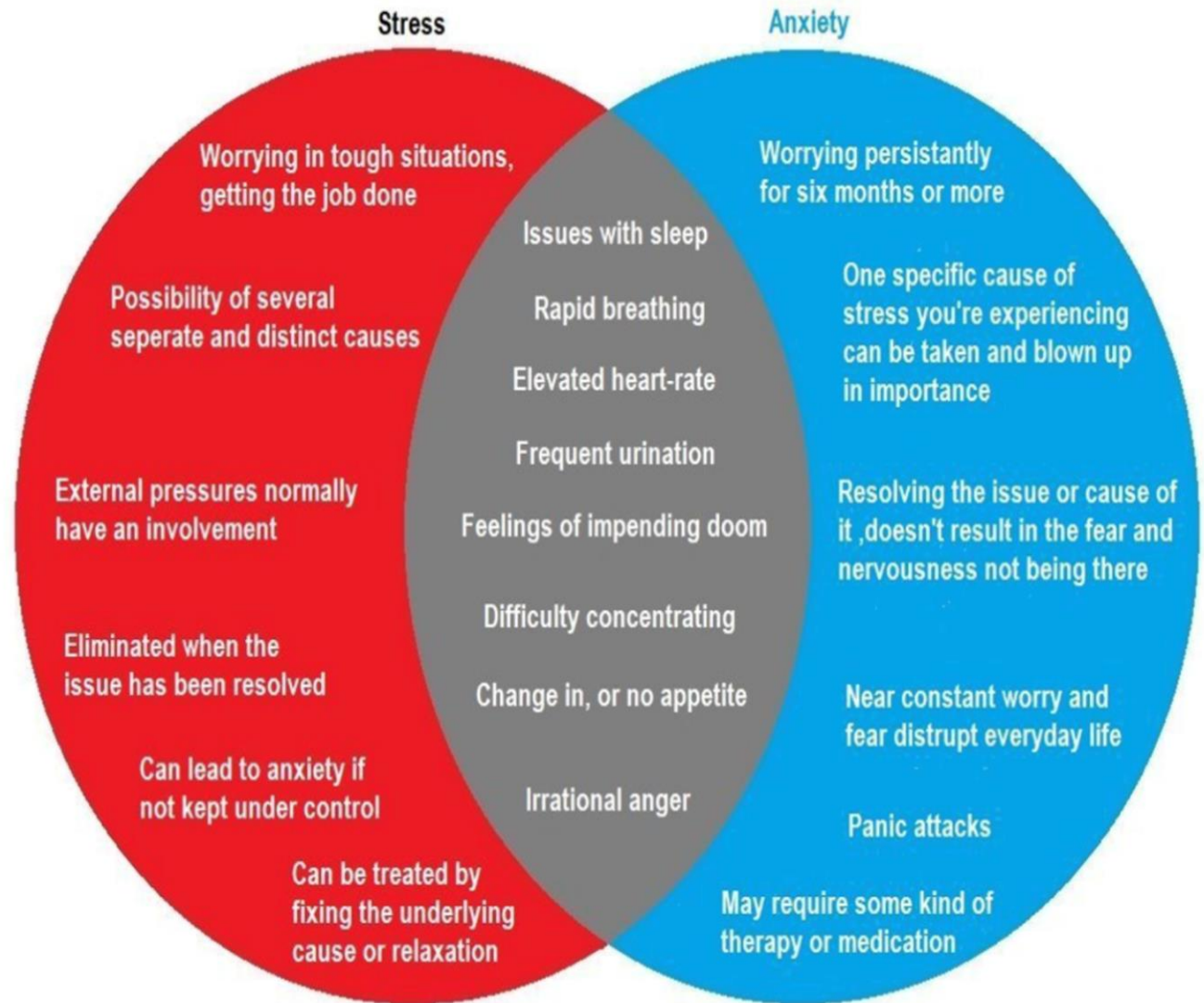
Typical signs that additional support may be needed

- ▶ Sudden & drastic changes may include
 - ▶ Grades decline
 - ▶ Social withdrawal
 - ▶ Changes to eating habits, weight loss or gain
 - ▶ Sleep problems, excessive or unable to sleep
 - ▶ Sudden changes in friends
 - ▶ Missing/Skipping school
 - ▶ Signs of substance use



How do distinguish between stress & anxiety

- ▶ Fear has a protective function, in moderate amounts, it can improve performance (strength, speed, stamina, motivation)
- ▶ When the anxiety is strong, lasts a long time (greater than 2 weeks), and begins to impede a child from being able to perform daily activities, that is cause for concern.



Navigating Communication about *Academics*

When and How to reach out

- ▶ **If your child is having difficulty with academics, i.e., assignments are not completed, quiz/test grade are low)**
- ▶ **Have your children take the initiative**
 - ▶ Review information on CTLS first
 - ▶ Seek out a friend in class to ask the question
 - ▶ Utilize office hours and WEB for questions and support
 - ▶ Email the teacher if unable to meet in person
 - ▶ Utilize honor society tutoring opportunities

Parent's role:

- ▶ Sign up for communication with the school
- ▶ Monitor Parent Communication with CTLS
- ▶ If you and your child are unable to find the answers, help your child determine when and how to approach the teacher (i.e., Help your child craft the email, practice what to say)
- ▶ Last resort – email the teacher and copy your child on the email

****Remember – you will not be going to college or work with your child!***



Navigating Communication about *Social Emotional Concerns*

When and How to reach out

If your child is struggling (difficulty with sleep, struggling with mood regulation, grades are impacted, peer relationships impacted, family struggles)

Have your children take the initiative

Utilize lunch or WEB for time to reach out for support by coming to the counseling office

Students can email the counselor to set up an appointment

Students can ask the teacher for a pass to come during class time if needed

Parent's role

Check the school counseling website for resources

If issues continue, reach out to the counselor by email to discuss the concerns

****Remember - you want to encourage your child to learn strategies for self care independently***



Thank you for
coming!

QUESTIONS?

