



#LIBERTYSTRONG

Newsletter from your Clinical Team

In this issue:

- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Suicide Abuse Prevention Resources
- Coloring Sheet/
- Mindfulness/ Mindful Moment
- Bullying Prevention Resources
- Teen Substance Use and Risks
- Resources
- Deep Breathing using your hand
- Journaling Prompts for October

How are we doing and what would you like to see in the Clinical Newsletter?

We want to connect with you! Please let Angie Huber know what you would like to see in the newsletter. We will do our best to meet your request. Send any requests to aahuber@fcps.edu.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

By: Dr. Joanna Wheeler, Liberty School Psychologist

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is characterized by the presence of obsessions and/or compulsions. Obsessions are reoccurring and persistent thoughts or urges that cause distress or anxiousness. Compulsions are repetitive behaviors or mental acts that a person feels driven to perform in response to obsessions or rules that must be exactly followed. For example, a person may have repeated thoughts (obsessions) about germs or contamination and therefore, engage in repetitive handwashing or cleaning rituals (compulsions) to relieve some of the anxiety or fear stemming from the obsessive thoughts. Another example would be that a person could have thoughts (obsessions) about things being symmetrical or in perfect order, and thus, engage in behaviors such as compulsive counting or re-arranging things in a precise way.

With OCD, the behaviors or mental acts (compulsions) are aimed at preventing or reducing anxiety or distress related to some dreaded event or situation that may be linked to obsessive thoughts. However, these behaviors or mental acts (compulsions) may not be connected in a realistic way with what they are designed to prevent or are a least clearly excessive. Of course, not all rituals or habits are compulsions. Everyone has things that they double check. Often for individuals with OCD, the obsessions and compulsions are very time-consuming and unpleasurable. The obsessions and compulsions may take up more than one hour per day and cause significant impairment in social, occupational, or other areas of functioning. In addition, the individual may have difficulty controlling thoughts or behaviors even when they realize that the thoughts or behaviors are excessive. Some people with OCD also have a tic disorder. Motor tics are sudden, brief, repetitive movements such as eye blinking, facial grimacing, or shoulder shrugging. Common vocal tics include repetitive throat-clearing.

With OCD, symptoms may come and go, get better with time, or worsen. Although adults with OCD may recognize that what they are doing doesn't make sense, some adults and children may not realize that their behavior is out of the ordinary. Parents or teachers typically recognize OCD symptoms in children. Common treatments for OCD include Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and/or medication. One of the most effective treatment for OCD is a type of Cognitive Behavior Therapy called Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP).

References

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596> Text citation: (American Psychiatric Association, 2013)



National Substance Abuse Prevention Month

October is a time to highlight the vital role of substance abuse prevention, to remember those who have lost their lives to substance abuse, to acknowledge those in recovery, as well as the children, parents, family, and friends supporting them.

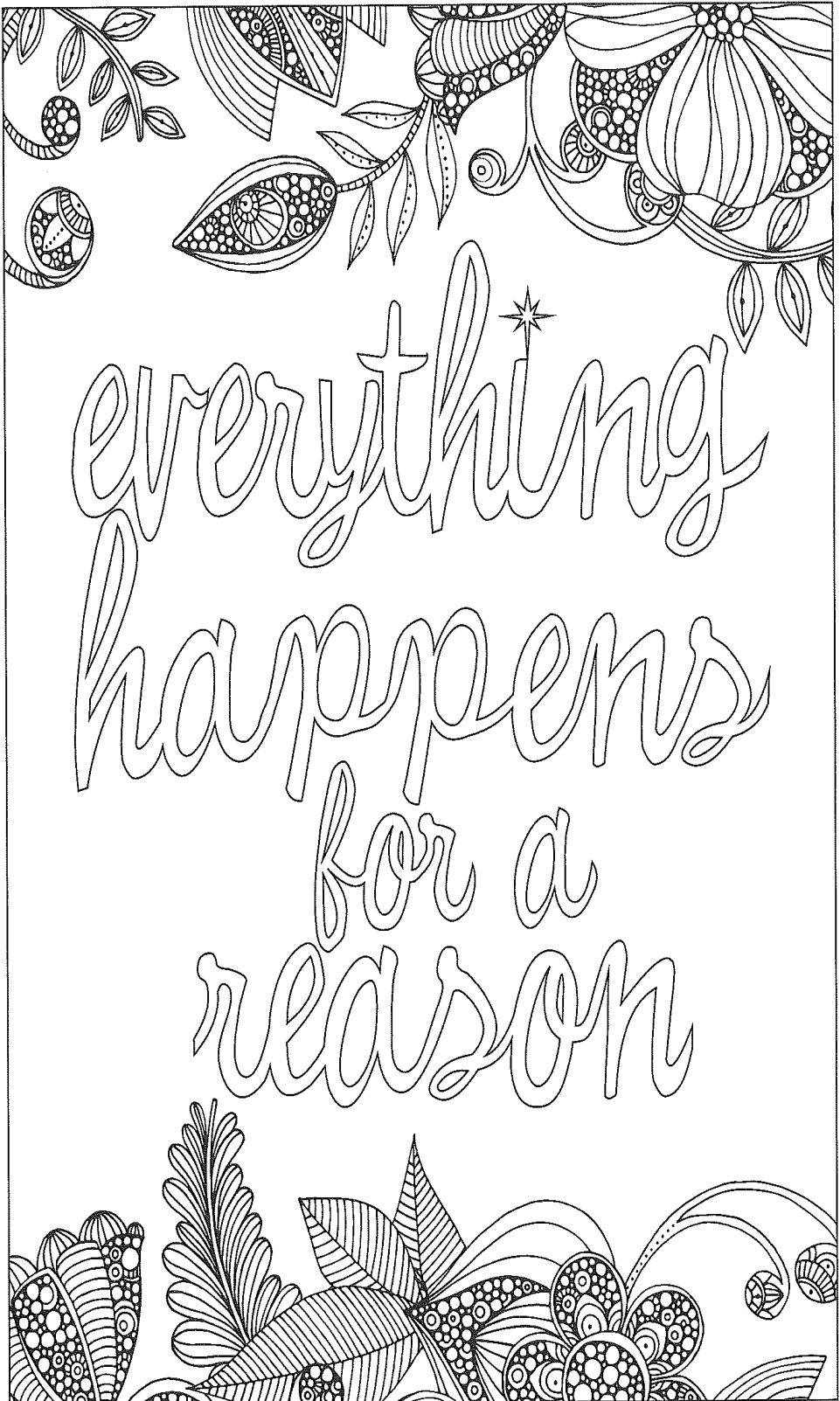
Substance Abuse in Virginia

According to the [National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics](#), teenagers in Virginia are 16.46 percent less likely to have used drugs in the last month than the average American teen. However, 44,000 youth in Virginia or 6.96 percent of 12- to 17-year-olds report using drugs in the last month. Among them:

- 77.27 percent report using marijuana;
- 2.37 percent report misusing pain relievers; and
- 9.01 percent report using alcohol in the last month.

VDOE, 2021

Enjoy this coloring page for stress relief!!!



Mindfulness

“ By: Angie Huber, School Social Worker Liberty MS

What is mindfulness? Why the big deal over mindfulness? How can it help you in life? Mindfulness is key to surviving our daily lives especially in this day and time of uncertainty, stress, and the busyness of our daily lives in the Northern Virginia area. In this area, we tend to be constantly on the go and often working to keep up with demands socially, academically, financially, relationally, and professionally. How do you do this and how does mindfulness help?

Mindfulness is a purposeful approach to taking care of ourselves. We often hear about eating, sleeping and exercise as the top ways to take care of ourselves. Mindfulness has become more and more on the forefront of strategies in selfcare as well. It is the act of slowing down to pay attention to what we experience in our lives with our bodies, thoughts, actions, and feelings. This process can be uncomfortable for some due to numerous different reasons: racing thoughts, anxiety, stress, time, questioning the value to doing it and so on. However, when growth, change or evaluation occurs, some type of mindfulness is typically involved.

For this article's purpose, I will focus on self-awareness strategies. [Learning to Breathe](#) is a curriculum we use in the schools at times with students. I will reference some of this material for this article. The premise is to use the BREATHE acronym to help students to learn Mindfulness.

B- Body (Listen! Your Body is Trying to Tell you Something.)

R- Reflections-Thoughts (Thoughts are Just Thoughts.)

E- Emotions (Surf the Waves of Your Emotions.)

A -Attention (Attention to Body, Thoughts, and Feelings is Good Stress Reduction.)

T-Tenderness – Take it as it is. (Learn to be Kind to Yourself.)

H- Healthy- Habits of Mind (Finding Ways to Practice Mindfulness in your Life Reduces Stress and Increases Inner Strength.)

E- Empowerment (Gain the Inner Edge)

What does all this mean? Mindfulness increases calmness, balance, and inner strength and reduces stress. The thought is also to not stay stuck in your emotions, thoughts, or actions but to find a way to release them realizing there is a balance to find in this process as opposed to remaining stuck. We can all benefit from these strategies with minimal effort.

Mindfulness Tips to Take Away:

Put a note on your computer screen or phone reminding yourself to “BREATHE”

Drive or walk with the music off to notice your surroundings

Take three slow, mindful breaths as you get up in the morning and go to sleep

Mindfully stretch when you first wake up and go to bed.

Really listen when you talk to a friend. Gently let your own thoughts go and focus.

Go outside at night and really look at the stars.

Go outside during the day for 3 minutes and look at something in nature.

Exercise mindfully, paying attention to the movement of your body.

Let your thoughts come and go, not remaining stuck on one thought.

Other resources:

[Did you know- mindful stretches](#)



“Calm app”

INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS & HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM

INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS

ARE UNWELCOME INVOLUNTARY MENTAL PATTERNS OR UNPLEASANT IDEAS THAT MAY BE UPSETTING OR TURN INTO OBSESSION



- CLOSELY RELATED TO OCD
- THEY CAN CAUSE DEPRESSION
- MANY DEAL WITH THEM VIA SUBSTANCE ABUSE

INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS CAN BE DEVASTATING BUT THERE ARE WAYS TO DEAL WITH THEM!

Deep breathing
using your hand.



MINDFUL MOMENT

TIPS TO HELP WITH AN ANXIETY ATTACK

- Look around you.
- Find *five* things you can *see*, *four* things you can *touch*, *three* things you can *hear*, *two* things you can *smell*, and *one* thing you can *taste*.

This is called grounding. It can help when you feel like you have lost all control of your surroundings.

Your students can check out Ms. Huber's google classroom to see many cool things to do, learn about or to use to cope!

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/e/2PACX-1vSMKer3dWvdXMgM3d3sdf_nnsAKWIHjsrXeGtWCtcqkIQdmqao7b5gVQAUT16Nk1p9kED56KcuAqH0b/pub?start=false&loop=false&delaysms=3000&slide=id.g8e48443adc_0_0



I hope you enjoy clicking around in my office to find some fun activities to do. Don't hesitate to let me know if you need something!! My email is

VIRTUAL ZEN DEN

[Sounds and Music](#)

[Meditation and Grounding Exercises](#)

[Visual Relaxation](#)

[Live Animal Cams](#)

[Yoga](#)

[Something Interesting](#)

[Pixar Short Film: La Luna](#)

[Pixar Short Film: Piper](#)

[PIXAR Short Films: Day and Night](#)

[Pixar Short Films: Partly Cloudy](#)

[Art and Creativity](#)

[Games and Puzzles](#)

October is....

National Bullying Prevention Month

October has been a time to acknowledge that bullying has devastating effects on children and families such as school avoidance, loss of self-esteem, increased anxiety, and depression.

Bullying in Virginia

The following statistics are from the [Technical Report of the Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey \(2020\)](#):

- Thirty-two (32) percent of students surveyed reported that bullying is a problem at their school, and four percent reported being bullied once or more per week at school this year.
- Thirty-five (35) percent of students surveyed reported that another student stole something from them.
- Twenty-two (22) percent of students surveyed reported being physically attacked, pushed, or hit by another student.
- Twenty-six (26) percent of students surveyed reported being threatened by another student.

Twenty-nine (29) percent of students told a teacher or another adult at school when they were bullied or harmed at school this year.

Another set of questions asked students about the prevalence of teasing and bullying in their school. Students reported observing that their peers get teased or put down about:

- “their sexual orientation” (40 percent),
- “their race or ethnicity” (32 percent),
- “their clothing or physical appearance” (61 percent), and
“sexual topics” (51 percent).

Take Action...

VDOE, 2021



More resources that you may find helpful!

The Parent Resource Center (PRC) is excited to offer access to their library resources.

Their library is open for pick-up, on Wednesdays, by appointment only, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Parenting Through Difficult Times: A Webinar for Families (*Presented in Arabic) (تربيته للمدرسية للعائلات) (الصحة النفسية والموارد المدرسية للعائلات) الاطفال في الأوقات الصعبة: ندوة عبر الإنترنت للعائلات مقدمة باللغة العربية

أبرز مواضيع النقاش في الندوة:

- الآثار النفسية التي قد تحدثها الجائحة على الأطفال.
- عوامل الخطر المسببة للأمراض النفسية.

استراتيجيات للأباء لتعزيز سلوك طلب المساعدة والصحة النفسية لأنفسهم ولأطفالهم.

الجمعة 29 أكتوبر 2021 11-10:30 صباحاً

التسجيل على الإنترنت لتربية الأطفال في الأوقات الصعبة: ندوة عبر الإنترنت للعائلات مقدمة باللغة العربية برجاء استخدام الرابط للتسجيل.

[سجل ل الصحة النفسية والموارد المدرسية للعائلات \(تربيته الأطفال في الأوقات الصعبة: ندوة عبر الإنترنت للعائلات مقدمة باللغة العربية\)](#)

Webinar Highlights:

- Psychological effects a pandemic may have on children
- Risk factors for psychological distress
- Strategies for parents to promote help-seeking behavior and emotional well-being for themselves and their children

Mental health and school resources for families

Friday, October 29, 2021 10-11:30 a.m.

[Register Online for Parenting Through Difficult Times: A Webinar for Families *Presented in Arabic](#)

SIBSHOPS: An Exciting, Virtual Workshop for Brothers and Sisters of Children with Special Needs: 2nd Opportunity this School Year

The Sibshop workshops are for children in grades 2-6 enrolled in Fairfax County Public Schools who have siblings with special needs to:

- Meet other siblings in a relaxed, virtual setting.
- Celebrate the many contributions made by brothers and sisters of children with special needs.
- Share sibling experiences and receive peer support.

Play games and have fun!

Presented by FCPS School Social Work Services

Monday, November 1, 2021

Two time slots are available: 10 a.m. or 1 p.m. Sessions run 1-1.5 hours

[Register for SIBSHOPS: An Exciting, Virtual Workshop for Brothers and Sisters of Children with Special Needs](#)

Try these activities for your student!

⇒ Liberty Middle School Afterschool Program

<https://libertyms.fcps.edu/activities/after-school-program>

⇒ Fairfax County Park Authority Programs

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes>

For more social-emotional resources and lessons please visit the LS Clinical Team's website (see the link below works best in Google Chrome):

<https://sites.google.com/view/liberty-ms-clinical-team/mental-wellness-topics>

some new videos added

Signs a Child Is Being Bullied

Look for changes in the child. However, be aware that not all children who are bullied exhibit warning signs.

Some signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches,
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Kids may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide

If you know someone in serious distress or danger, don't ignore the problem. Get help right away.

Stopbullying.gov



Resources:

If you or someone you care about is in crisis, please call [911](tel:911) or access one of the mental health resources below:

- ⇒ *Reach out to a trusted adult (parent, counselor, teacher, coach, etc.); <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk>*
- ⇒ *Text NEEDHELP to 85511 for the [Crisis Link](#) Hotline at or call them at 703-527-4077*
- ⇒ *Chat online with a specialist at [CrisisChat.org](https://www.crisischat.org) or [ImAlive.org](https://www.imalive.org)*
- ⇒ *Call an emergency mental health center at 703 573-5679 (Merrifield Center), 703-536-2000 (Dominion Hospital), or 703-289-7560 (INOVA emergency services)*
- ⇒ *CR2 – 844-627-4747*
- ⇒ *Go to the nearest emergency room at your local hospital*

Call 911

Teen Substance Use & Risks

“Parents play a critical role in their children’s lives. As their children grow to pre-teens and teens, parents worry about new risks they may experience. One such risk is the use of substances, such as alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, and other drugs. Parents can help by talking to their teen’s pediatrician about screening for substance use.

Substance use by teens can have a big impact on their health and well-being. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), developed a guide for implementing substance use screening in pediatric practices to help pediatricians address substance use concerns. The AAP recommends screening for substance use in children, starting at 9 years of age. “ CDC

2 POPULAR PRODUCTS AMONG TEENAGERS:

Vape

“Is vaping bad for you? There are many unknowns about vaping, including what chemicals make up the vapor and how they affect physical health over the long term. “People need to understand that e-cigarettes are potentially dangerous to your health,” says Blaha. “Emerging data suggests [links to chronic lung disease and asthma](#), and associations between dual use of e-cigarettes and smoking with [cardiovascular disease](#). You’re exposing yourself to all kinds of chemicals that we don’t yet understand and that are probably not safe.”

Hopkinsmedicine.org

What does it look like?



There are numerous varieties. Some students only carry a cartridge to put in the Vape as well. If you think your child is Vaping, ask questions. Many different drugs are put in Vapes and can be lethal.

Edibles:

Edibles contain numerous different types of drugs and come in the form of a cookie, popsicle, chip, gummy, brownie, any form of candy or melt, chips, cereal, etc. Most of them have marijuana, but some also have other drugs as well. While some think that it may be unlikely to overdose on weed edibles to the point of death, other negative consequences have been observed, such as anxiety, panic attacks and psychosis.



Featuring Chelsie & Chris
From Cannalook.com

Counseling is often a good approach to help people to work through struggles that they are having in their life. Many feel comfortable with the idea of counseling and many do not feel comfortable. One of the benefits of counseling is that it can help you to find solutions or to problem solve more quickly than without it. However, some still may not be comfortable and to add to the challenges of becoming comfortable with the idea of counseling, during COVID, it is difficult to find counselors who are not meeting virtually, as some do not feel comfortable with meeting virtually. A good alternative is to use journaling. Here are some journal prompts for October.



JOURNAL PROMPTS FOR OCTOBER

31 Mindfulness Journal Prompts

We've put together a list of mindfulness journal prompts to help students turn mindfulness into a daily habit.

1. When I think about the people in my life who love me, what do I feel grateful for?
2. Sit quietly and just think for five minutes. What thoughts go through your head?
3. What things do I love the most about my life?
4. What are my biggest pet peeves? Why?
5. Some areas that I'd like to improve in my life include:
6. What are my most important values?
7. What are the three qualities I love most about myself?
8. Do I procrastinate in my life? Why?
9. What are my top fears? How are these fears holding me back?
10. What are the three things I spend most of my time on every day?
11. How am I impacting other people around me daily?
12. What do I want to achieve in the next week, month, and year?
13. What things in my life can I be grateful for today?
14. What things in my life make me smile? How can I incorporate them into my life more?
15. How do I feel about myself right now?
16. What things do I want to learn next in life outside of school?
17. What can I do to lower my stress levels?
18. What have my biggest successes been in the last year? In my entire life?
19. What are the things I look forward to the most every day?
20. What things make me feel alive and fulfilled?
21. What are my most significant weaknesses, and how can I work to improve them?
22. What can I do to become more present when I spent time with people I care about?
23. Sit in nature for a few minutes. Listen to everything. What do you hear and what do you feel?
24. What could I do to make success in life easier?
25. If today was my last day alive, what would I want to write?
26. What things in my life do I feel do not make sense?
27. What are the top characteristics of the people I want to be like? Can I bring those characteristics into my own life?
28. When was the last time you really laughed? What did you laugh about?
29. If you could get beyond your fears today, what would you do?
30. What things in my life cause me the most stress or anxiety? Can I change them?
31. Would my five-year-old self be proud of the person I am today?

www.Journalbuddies.com

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