



Weekly Update | January 22, 2020

Vol. 1, Issue 3

A Message from Dan Costin

The Anxiety Trap

My name is Dan Costin and I am one of the adjustment counselors here at SSCPS. I'm thankful to have been given the opportunity to communicate with you this week. When I was first asked about writing a weekly update, thought I would write about what an adjustment counselor's day is like (busy) or what my colleagues in the SSCPS counseling department do (save the world), but I decided on something that felt a bit more relevant to all of us. You might have heard of something called "anxiety" before.

This week is the beginning of midterm exams in Level IV and in the High School. As you might imagine, stress and anxiety are abound. In fact, across the United States, anxiety rates are on the rise, year over year, especially amongst teens ([CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)). In teenagers, anxiety is the most common mental health diagnosis. Nearly one in three children will meet the criteria for an anxiety disorder by the time they turn 18 ([childmind.org](https://www.childmind.org)). With that being our reality, anxiety has quickly gone from an occasionally-used term to one essential to the teen lexicon, alongside typical teenage words like "streaks", "extra", and "lit" (even though a number of our students have made it clear that I am too old to use such terminology).

Why Is Anxiety on the Rise?

With anxiety, we have to talk about technology, but in a way one might not expect. We tend to focus on how our children are affected by modern technological advancements. In fact, this story begins with how technology, and especially the information we obtain through technology, affects parents and other supportive adults.

More than ever, we have access to information. Good information, bad information, ugly information, funny information. There is almost quite literally an infinite amount of information to which we have access. At the beginning of this trend, during the '80s and '90s, many parents' styles began to change. The world suddenly seemed more dangerous than it once was. We saw shootings and car accidents on TV and felt fearful. Flash forward to the 2010s, when this information flooded our brains, as our news source went from being confined in the living room to always available in our back pocket. We went from knowing that these things happened

somewhere else to believing these things happened to people and places we felt we knew. We responded with fear that seemed to make sense. We began expecting frequent assurance that our children are okay in a world we believed to be increasingly dangerous. In fact, the world as a whole is much safer than we would be led to believe (NPR). Anxiety is the product of overestimating the likelihood that those bad things will happen to us or to people we care about. Imagine living in constant fear of being struck by lightning - you would never experience the joys outside your home. It is not that our world is less safe; it is that *information* about the worst, most upsetting, and scariest parts of it can invade the typically safe and wonderful spaces around us. Let's let the 2020s be the decade that we put fear and anxiety back in perspective.

What Does Anxiety Feel Like?

We often conceptualize anxiety as a purely emotional experience. We *feel* anxious. We *feel* sick to our stomachs. We *feel* tired. Too infrequently do we talk about where anxiety actually starts - our thoughts.

Anxiety in anticipating something bad happening. We are looking ahead and predicting the future. Sometimes this is helpful. It is helpful to anticipate midterms coming so that we can prepare for them. On the other hand, looking ahead at a test and believing it a certainty that we are going to fail is not helpful and typically leads to feelings of anxiety. It doesn't help to tell children to stop feeling anxiety - we want to teach them to stop thinking anxiously.

How Do We Help?

Young people are talking about it. Young people are affected by it. As adults, what do we do to help them? Frankly, the hardest part about overcoming anxiety is that successfully reducing it requires us to *do the exact opposite of what anxiety wants us to do*.

Despite so frequently seeming to be the opposite, children and teens pay close attention to the things their parents say and do. Instead of shielding them from anxiety-inducing experiences, we help them face anxiety. We walk with them through it. We feel their feelings. We listen to their thoughts. Gently, we help them use their rational brain to fight back against the anxious part of their brain. Here are a few tips on how to do that:

Build Resilience: Try not to focus on the magnitude of the task, but instead on the child or teen's abilities. Instead of saying, "Wow, advanced placement classes are going to be really, really hard this year", say something like, "AP classes might be tough, but you are such a hard-working student I know you can succeed".

Recognize Avoidance: Pick up on cues that a child or teen is trying to avoid an event or situation. Avoidance is a common response to anxiety. Avoidance also makes anxiety much worse over time.

Encourage children and teens to **take small steps and face their fears**. Anxious in crowds? Let's go to the mall on a quieter day and do something fun. The solution out of the anxiety is often through the anxiety.

Validate and Reframe: If your child or teen is already upset, let them know their feelings of fear and anxiety are okay to have. Listen. Let those feelings play out. Let them know it is okay to be anxious sometimes. When they have calmed down a bit, try "reframing" the problem. For example, you might say, "I know what a capable

young person you are. We have two whole weeks until your test. I bet we can find plenty of time to prepare.”

Socratic Questioning: The Greek philosopher Socrates knew that the best way to change a person’s mind is by asking questions. The art of asking thoughtful questions teaches our children and teens to overcome anxiety on their own by asking these same questions. Here are a few examples:

- What are your worries saying?
- What is the evidence for and against your worry?
- If what you fear really happens, could you be able to handle it?
- Are there some ways to manage or cope with the problem so that it is not so bad?

I hope that this information is helpful in supporting your children. Please have a relaxing, anxiety-free week and feel free to reach out to any of us in the counseling department for questions.

Dan Costin
Adjustment Counselor
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Additional Reading

Helping Your Anxious Teen by Sheila Achar Josephs
Anxious Children, Anxious Parents by Lynn Lyons

Sensory Path



As an occupational therapist (OT), having a “tool bag” is basically a necessity. Whether it’s a golf-sized pencil to help improve a kindergartener’s pencil grasp, or a piece of graph paper to visually organize a third grader’s math problems, there are a variety of tools which can be found inside an OT’s tool bag. Some of these tools could be specific for a particular student’s needs, while others may be useful for all learners. One of the things I like most about being a school-based OT is collaborating and sharing ideas for various tools for students with teachers and staff.

Following the holiday break, both staff and students were introduced to a new, universal tool at our K-8 building, a hallway-length sensory-motor path! More than 40-feet long and occupying the entire length of a level two hallway, the pathway was installed to provide sensory-based motor movement breaks for some of our younger learners. From frog jumps to crab crawls, the decals for the pathway were purposefully chosen to provide both vestibular and proprioceptive sensory input, while increasing the heart rate. By providing this type of input and an opportunity for physical activity, research shows that both cognition and attention to classroom tasks increases (Reynolds and Andelin, 2018).

When completed properly, one cycle through the path can be done in under two minutes; beginning with frog jumps and ending with a calming yoga pose. Since one of the main goals of the path is to help students to get into the “green zone” and to self-regulate, there is a zone meter located at the end of the path for students to do a quick self-check in before returning to class. In order to ensure the pathway is being utilized in the most beneficial way, Theresa and I recorded a short training video to

be viewed by staff, and if necessary, students as well. The final step (no pun intended) to this sensory path is to give it a name. With input from both staff and students, we are asking for ideas for a name that relates to self-regulation. If you or one of your children have any ideas please feel free to submit them to myself at agoff@sscps.org, or Theresa at tgreen@sscps.org by January 31st. Once a name for the sensory path is selected, a banner will be created and proudly displayed for all to see in the hallway.

Lastly, we can't thank both Wayne Heuer and David Griffith, our Facilities team, for their help in making this project a reality. From the initial consultation regarding the location of the path, to the attention-to-detail with the decals, your hard work and collaboration is very much appreciated.

Our hope is that the pathway will provide a quick, and easy to implement movement break, as well as become a universal tool in everyone's tool bag!

Allison Goff, MOT, OTR/L
Occupational Therapist





**Congratulations to all students who participated in the Level 4 Spelling Bee. Our top 5 spellers, who will move on the SSCPS finals on Thursday 1/30/20 at 2:00pm in the PE space are:
Amogh Athimamula, Lehna Belony, Rick Deibel, George Seabury, and Jordan Alexandre.**

Thanks to Katie Curry for working with all of our Spelling Bee contestants during FIT for the past quarter.



	Wednesday 1/22	Thursday 1/23	Friday 1/24
8:15-8:30	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory
8:30-10:00	A Block	C Block	E Block
10:00-10:30	Break	Break	Break
10:30-12:00	B Block	D Block	Make-up exams*
*Students without a makeup exam will be dismissed at 10:00 on Friday			

Level IV Midyear Exam Schedule			
	Wednesday 1/22	Thursday 1/23	Friday 1/24
8:15-8:30	Pod Time	Pod Time	Pod Time
8:30-10:00	7 th Science	7 th Spanish	7 th Math
	8 th English	8 th History	8 th Spanish
10:00-10:30	Break	Break	Break
10:30-12:00	7 th History	7 th English	Project Reflection
	8 th Science	8 th Math	

From the Health Office

This flu season is shaping up to be challenging. Like many schools, we are seeing an increased number of cases.

Below are a few reminders about our policies regarding viruses. Please follow these guidelines to help limit the transmission of illness.

- **Students must stay home with any vomiting or diarrhea. They may return to school once symptom-free for 24 hours.**
- **Students must stay home if they have a fever >100.4. They may return to school when fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication like Tylenol/ibuprofen.**
- **Students should stay home with severe cold symptoms/cough.**

[Click here](#) some information from the Massachusetts Department of Health regarding the flu virus. Please reach out to any of the nurses with questions. Thank you for your help in keeping everyone in our building healthy!

Darcie, Barbara, and Susan

From the Foundation



January is Support Athletics Month!

Basketball, Volleyball, Soccer, Baseball, Softball, Cross-Country and Track
SSCPS student athletes are among the best in the league.

Please show your support of our Athletics Program by donating in January.

Thank you!

DONATE

Annual Fund Update

Please make your [contribution](#) to the Annual Fund today! We are hoping for 100% participation from all of our families to reach our \$75,000 goal.



**Norwell Community
Blood Drive**
**Sponsored by South Shore
Charter Public School**

Gym
104 Longwater Drive
Norwell, MA 02061

**Tuesday, February 4, 2020
1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter:
NORWELL to schedule an appointment.

Streamline your donation experience and save up to 15 minutes by visiting RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions on the day of your appointment.



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Level IV Project Collecting Donations for [Cradles to Crayons](#)

The Creative Minds Project led by Katie Curry is collecting donations for Cradles to Crayons. Cradles to Crayons is an organization that collects clothing and other items for homeless children ages 0-12. Their goal is to help children have basic necessities. There will be a donation box located near the front desk labelled "Cradles to Crayons Donations." We will be collecting new or like new items such as clothing, shoes, toys, books, baby gear, and other basic necessities beginning January 13 through February 13.

[Click here for a list of items needed.](#)

Thank you!

Parents Association Hosting Teacher Appreciation Brunch
Click below to volunteer or donate!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f4ca9ab23a2ff2-teacher>

https://venmo.com/code?user_id=2777105595105280701



SSCPS YEARBOOK COMMITTEE

The 2019-2020 Yearbook is now in progress.
To order online go to www.coffeepond.com, to login use school
password: bluejaguar.

Families may submit a special personalized page for their senior that will appear in

the back of the book at these rates: Full page \$150, 1/2 pg. \$75, 1/4 pg. \$50. Due date is March 30, 2020. The yearbook staff can help with any design concerns.

Please email Christine at cbodnar@sscps.org with any questions.

Upcoming Events

Adult Trivia Night | January 25, 2020

Registration is open for our January 25th **Adult Trivia Night** at Weston Hall in Weymouth and we hope you will join us! There is a \$25 fee per person and this will include Stump Trivia, a pasta dinner, raffles, and a cash bar. Use the [link](#) to sign up today.

25th Annual Auction | March 27, 2020

Save the date for our **25th Annual Auction** that will take place on Friday, March 27th at the Pembroke Country Club. Reach out to Laurie Dannison at ldannison@sscps.org, or 781-982-4202, ext. 207 if you would like to be part of the Auction committee. We are always looking for new volunteers to help out with the event. Thank you for your support!

Weds-Fri	01/22-01/24	Mid Term Exams for Grades 7-12 - Early Release	See Schedule
Saturday	01/25	Ski Club to Ragged Mountain	
Saturday	01/25	SSCEF Hosting Trivia Night at Weston Hall, Weymouth	
Tuesday	01/28	Grade 11 to E. M. Kennedy Institute	
Wednesday	01/29	High School Mock Trial to Hingham	
Wednesday	01/29	Senior Trip Meeting at 700	6:00pm
Thursday	01/30	Bright Star Theatre Presentations to K-8 at the Gym	
Thursday	01/30	Parents Association Meeting	8:30am

2019-2020 School Calendar Update

Linked below under *School Documents* please find the revised 2019-2020 School Calendar. Calendar revisions have been made to make up for four lost days. Additional snow days will be added to the end of the year. The revised calendar reflects the following:

- The January 17 full day professional development day has been changed to a half day/12:00 dismissal

- The March 18 full day professional development day has been changed to a half day/12:00 dismissal
- Two half days have been added to the end of the school year. The last day for students will be Tuesday, June 16.

Important Links

Weekly Updates are emailed and posted to our website www.sscps.org every Wednesday.

- **February Order Forms and Menus are available.** [Breakfast and Lunch Menus and Order Forms](#)
- **After School Enrichment Sign-up:** [Winter Art Class](#)
- Health Office Nutrition Nuggets Issue: [January](#)
- Visit our new online option to [purchase](#) SSCPS apparel
- Community Interest: Click here for information on [Team IMPACT](#)

Here are links to upcoming events and other items of interest. Please contact Pam Algera at palgera@sscps.org to submit SSCPS items for publication.

School Documents

[2019-20 School Calendar](#)

[Student and Family Handbook](#)

[SSCPS By-Laws](#)

[Pick-up Procedures](#)



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Our website address is:

www.sscps.org

