

CVU Direction Center Fall Newsletter 2021

Hello Families!

It is hard to believe it is late October and that we are a quarter of the way through the school year. This newsletter is an attempt to catch you up and also to project a bit into the future – which can be a challenge at this time. More about that in a moment. And here are the highlights of what follows with links to jump you to certain sections.

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General Update:

First, as you have likely heard in the news, from your student, or observed yourselves, the transition back to full time school has been experienced very differently across our student population. This is as expected and for some, this has proven yet another continuation of an 18 month period of disappointments and frustrations. I think for many of us there was hope in the spring that we were seeing the end of covid impacting our lives. And subsequently we all have had to deal with the fact that the pandemic has not subsided as we had hoped.

There continues to be disagreement about the best ways to deal with this evolving scenario and as the “adults” disagree, this leaves young people struggling to understand the right answer, the right things to be doing. This certainly adds to a feeling of uneasiness, similar to when parents are disagreeing at home. This also

makes it more difficult to project into the future with any certainty which causes additional stress as living with ambiguity is uncomfortable.

And so, it becomes important to learn to pay attention to what we can predict. The seasons will change, the school year will progress, school vacations will come and go, we will learn new skills even as we sometimes struggle. And this matters, because as we focus on what we can predict, we can experience an increased sense of control and a decrease in that unsettling sense of ambiguity.

Not surprisingly, we are also seeing an increasing number of students and faculty who are experiencing symptoms of anxiety. Steph Volkmar and Vanessa Harman, two of our school based social workers, collated a list of activities one can engage in to decrease these symptoms. See these below under “Tips”.

In our advisories, we are offering opportunities for structured student conversations and activities to practice reflection, gratitude, relaxation and fun. The goal is to increase opportunities for connection and personal growth. These practices and skills can also increase a student’s sense of self knowledge and self-control.

Tips:

Last year we offered some tips about how families might build rituals to create a sense of consistency. We offer them again as these can be very helpful to ground us in predictability and a shared experience.

We want to offer the idea of family routines. These might be dinner or breakfast together. This might be a game night or a making dinner together night that happens consistently and predictably. This might be a daily walk or a TV show that everyone is watching together. The key here is creating rituals that are consistent and reliable and which create a sense of belonging. In this time of restricted connection (one needs only to think of the careful if subtle avoidance of others in the grocery store as an example) it is essential that we intentionally create consistent opportunities for connection. Who are our people and how can we be sure we are making the maximum use of each other to feel connected? Phones and technology can help - and in person connection is really something different. What will it look like in your home??

As noted above, taking a few minutes to learn to manage our feelings can be a great way to diminish anxiety. Simple 5 Minute Coping Strategies - we offer these to you [here](#) - can be a quick intervention and when practiced when not feeling anxious, can be a great resource when we are feeling anxious. Give one or more a try and if they work for you, perhaps you can invite your student to join you in them. Learning to manage our emotional state is a critical piece of our social emotional development

Information by grade level:

Grade 9

It is important that we keep in mind that most of our grade nine students have not been in school full time since March of their seventh grade year. The transition back to full time school with all of the academic and emotional self-management skills this requires has been both exciting and challenging for students. Some students are thrilled to be back in a school full time even while learning to adjust to a new school environment and increased academic demands. Others find themselves struggling with the demands socially or academically or both. We are fortunate at CVU to have grade 9 organized by house, allowing much closer involvement with staff and students. Field trips and activities have offered a diversity of opportunities for students to meet others and their faculty while also allowing staff to determine additional supports some students may require.

Grade 10

For grade 10 students in most cases, their experience of high school has been limited to two days a week in school, the balance being remote. Adjusting to the increased expectations about learning and work completion can be trying and tiring. Teachers are evaluating student successes and challenges and adjusting their expectations accordingly.

Many 10th graders recently took the Pre-ACT, a practice test for the ACT which has historically been one of two options for college admissions tests along with the SAT. The use of these tests for admissions is changing rapidly, in part because they have not proven to be particularly effective as predictors of student success in college. The Pre-ACT does include an interest inventory that does invite further conversation about post-secondary goals which can be very useful.

Grade 11

For most grade 11 students, they are more than halfway through their high school experience. It is natural to begin looking beyond high school and this can be both exciting and scary, particularly during these unpredictable times. There is plenty of mixed messaging about the importance of college vs other additional training as well as plenty of information about the college process. We offer a couple of timely pieces – this short NPR piece about the value of vocational training [here](#) and a longer piece recently put out by some of the VT colleges about the college application process [here](#). Both are very informative.

Starting Junior Year, every CVU student has the option to take up to two free college courses through the VT Dual Enrollment Program. Courses can be taken any semester, including summer and completed before high school graduation. Please connect with your school counselor for more information.

Many 11th graders took advantage of the free PSAT administration last week, and we look forward to exploring the results when we begin junior meetings – individual meetings with juniors and their school counselors – beginning in mid-January. In the meantime, two excellent learning opportunities are an Options After High School panel on November 10th that will speak to vocational and career options and the Junior Panel on January 12th. Keep an eye out for additional information on these events.

Grade 12


Many grade 12 students are in the process of projecting into their own future beyond CVU and technical centers and high school in general. Many have already met with their school counselors as they focus on the college application process with deadlines approaching in November and beyond. A few VT Admissions Directors recently offered a panel reflecting on the college admissions process – a video of that can be found [here](#).

Other students see different paths forward including the military or career options. This short [piece](#) from NPR offers an interesting perspective on the value of training other than a bachelor's degree. We will be offering a panel discussion reflecting on career training opportunities on November 10th. This will be an opportunity to hear from career folks from the Vt Dept of Labor and from workforce initiatives at VTC and CCV. Watch for upcoming announcements. Counselors continue to look forward to meeting with all of their seniors.

Resources:

Included below are a few resources you may find helpful. If you are looking for some support in the community including therapists, check out the link under Outpatient Mental Health Resources. If you want to try out some of the quick anxiety reduction techniques, check out the 5 Minute Coping Strategies. If you are looking for brief ongoing posts or videos, check out the Instagram and TikTok links below.

Outpatient Mental Health Resources

 [Community MH Referrals](#)

Quick Coping Strategies

5 Minute Coping Strategies

Instagram

[@Heytiffanyroe](#) - Tiffany Roe, therapist

[@Nedratawwab](#) - Nedra Glover Tawwab, Therapist

[@Wholeheartedschoolcounseling](#) - Resource Maker for Educations, Parents, Social Emotional Learning

[@The.holistic.psychologist](#) - Dr. Nicole LePera, Psychologist

[@Drcarolineleaf](#) - Neuroscientist

[@Tonitalkstherapy](#) - Real talk from a real anxious therapist

[@Amoderntherapist](#) - Psychologist

[@Mindfulcounseling](#) - modern health

[@Sitwithit](#) - Whitney Goodman LMFT

[@Mollybcounseling](#) -

[@Psych_today](#) - insights about everybody's favorite subject: ourselves

[@Letstalk.mentalhealth](#) -

[@Wetheurban](#) (hold on for this one)

TikTok:

[@doctorshepard_md](#)

[@drjuliesmith](#)

[@nadiaaddesi](#)

[@moderntherapist](#)

[@Lindsay.flemingpc](#)

Important Dates to Remember:

11/10 - Post High School Training and Careers Panel

11/11 - Dual Enrollment and Technical Center Fast Forward Voucher system opens for students planning on taking a college course for Spring (2022) semester.

1/12 - College Panel Night an informational evening for Juniors and their Families

1/25 - CTE recruitment video in Advisory and Informational Meeting during C3

1/26 - BTC recruitment video in Advisory and Informational Meeting during C3

2/7 - BTC Student Visit Day

2/8 - CTE Student Visit Day

Discounted Ski Pass Opportunities

Students that received final grades of an A- and above for the 2020-2021 school year are eligible for a Mad River Glen Smarty Pants and Sugarbush Student Achievement passes. The Mad River Glen ski pass is free and Sugarbush will be offering a ski pass

for \$150.00 plus tax. If you would like to confirm your eligibility please come to the Direction Center.

Below are the steps and information for obtaining the ski passes.

Mad River Glen Smarty Pants Pass: The Mad River Glen link is <https://www.madriverglen.com/smarty-pants>. This will take you to the MRG web page which will have details about the program including a link to sign up and order a pass. Students will need to upload a photo at the time of ordering their pass. Mad River Glen will print and mail the pass, they will not be available for pick up at the ticket window. All season pass requests must be submitted by **November 30th 2021**, at this point Mad River Glen will **close** the program and not accept any late request.

Sugarbush Student Achievement Pass: Students can pick up a Sugarbush voucher in the Direction Center starting on November 15, 2021. Parents and Guardians will need to go to <https://ikonpass.com> to set up an account and sign the appropriate waivers. This website is also used to purchase the ski pass using the discount code provided on the Sugarbush voucher.