

SOCIAL WORK NEWS

FOURTH EDITION December 2024



PARENT CORNER

FROM SANDY WALKER

This month we are going to talk about **Communication**.

The teenage years can be difficult for both parents as well as teens. During this stage our kids are doing exciting new things like sports, being involved in plays, attending concerts, dating, etc. At the same time, our teens are also pushing boundaries (and buttons) and throwing tantrums.

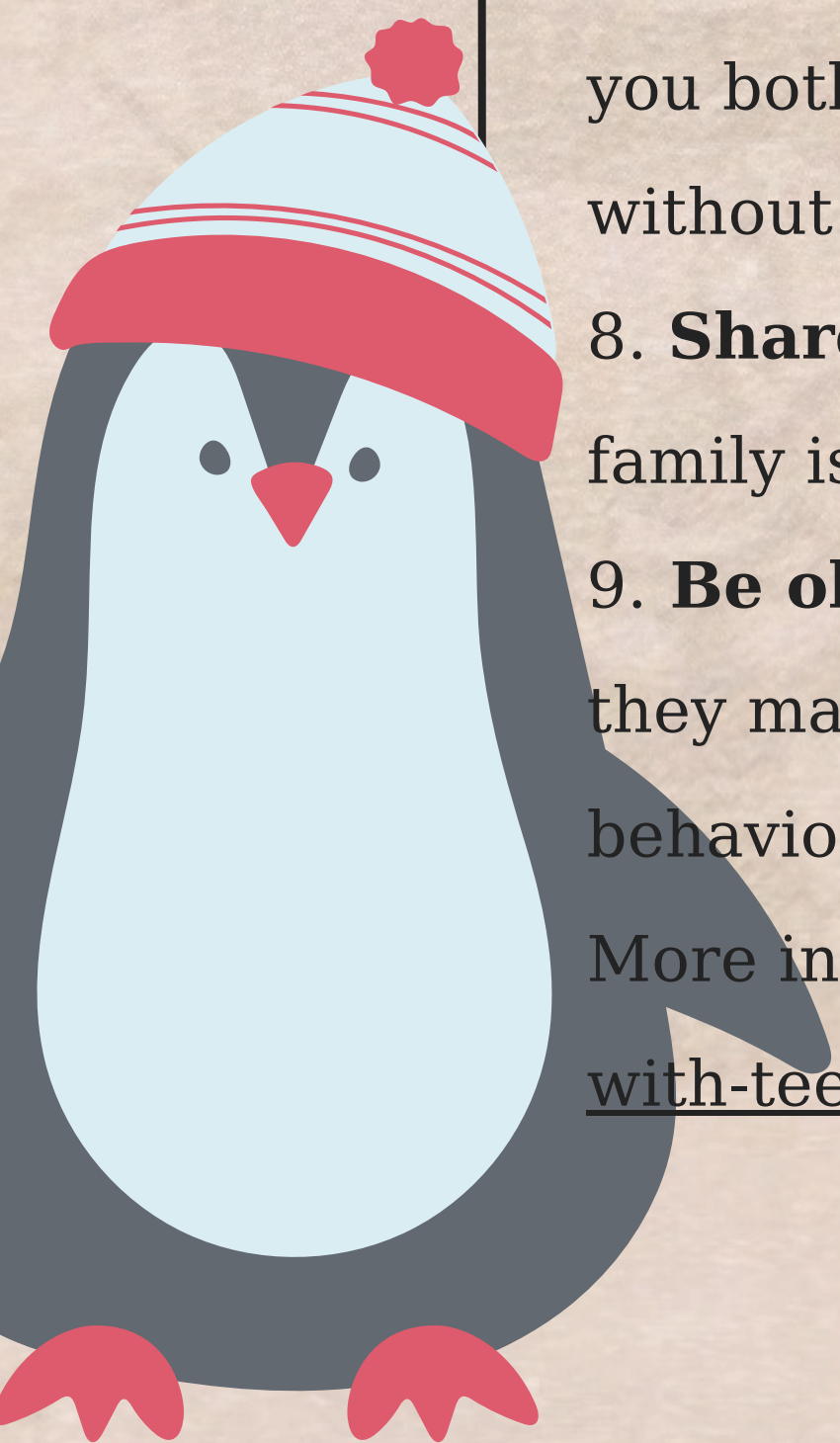
At this developmental stage in their lives, teens pull away from their parents and begin to assert their own independence. No wonder they sometimes act as if they think they're the center of the universe. This makes for complicated parenting, especially because teens are beginning to make decisions about things that have real consequences, like school and friends and driving, not to speak of substance use and sex. But they aren't good at regulating their emotions yet, so teens are prone to taking risks and making impulsive decisions.

This means that having a healthy and trusting parent-child relationship during the teenage years is more important than ever. Staying close isn't easy, though. Teens often aren't very gracious when they are rejecting what they perceive to be parental interference. While they're an open book to their friends, they might become mute when asked by mom how their day went. A request that seemed reasonable to dad may be received as an outrage.

If this sounds familiar, take a deep breath and remind yourself that your child is going through their terrible teens. It is a phase that will pass, and your job as parent is still vitally important, only the role may have changed slightly.

1. **Listen.** Kids are more likely to be open with their parents if they don't feel pressured to share information. Remember even an offhand comment about something that happened during the day is their way of reaching out, and you're likely to hear more if you stay open and interested — but not prying.
2. **Validate their feelings.** Show kids that you understand and empathize by reflecting their sentiments back: "Wow, that does sound difficult."
3. **Show trust.** Teens want to be taken seriously, especially by their parents. Look for ways to show that you trust your teen.
4. **Don't be a dictator.** You still get to set the rules, but be ready to explain them. While pushing the boundaries is natural for teenagers, hearing your thoughtful explanation about why parties on school nights aren't allowed will make the rule seem more reasonable.
5. **Give praise.** Teenagers might act like they're too cool to care about what their parents think, but the truth is they still want your approval.
6. **Control your emotions.** It's easy for your temper to flare when your teen is being rude, but don't respond in kind. Remember that you're the adult and they are less able to control their emotions or think logically when they're upset.
7. **Do things together.** Talking isn't the only way to communicate, and during these years it's great if you can spend time doing things you both enjoy, whether it's cooking or hiking or going to the movies, without talking about anything personal.
8. **Share regular meals.** Sitting down to eat a meal together as a family is another great way to stay close.
9. **Be observant.** It's normal for kids to go through some changes as they mature, but pay attention if you notice changes to their mood, behavior, energy level, or appetite.

More information at: <https://childmind.org/article/tips-communicating-with-teen/>





COMMUNITY CORNER

FROM ARIANA DEIGNAN-KOSMIDES



SCHOOL BREAK GROCERIES OPPORTUNITY/ ALIMENTOS PARA ESTUDIANTES DURANTE LAS VACACIONES ESCOLARES

Saturday, December 24 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

In partnership with Beulah Heights, Cathedral of High Praise, CT Foodshare, New Haven Public Schools, Loaves and Fishes, the NICE Center, and Witness to Hunger, United Way will be distributing groceries at four sites across New Haven.

Please bring your own bags!

Sábado, 21 de Diciembre de 2024, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

En colaboración con Beulah Heights, Cathedral of High Alabement, CT FoodShare, New Haven Public Schools, Loaves and Fishes, el NICE Center y Witness to Hunger, United Way distribuirán alimentos en cuatro sitios de New Haven. ¡Por favor, traiga sus propias bolsas!

Sites

John Martinez School, 100 James Street, New Haven

Truman School, 114 Truman Street, New Haven

Wexler-Grant School, 55 Foote St, New Haven

L.W. Beecher School, 100 Jewell St, New Haven

Sitios

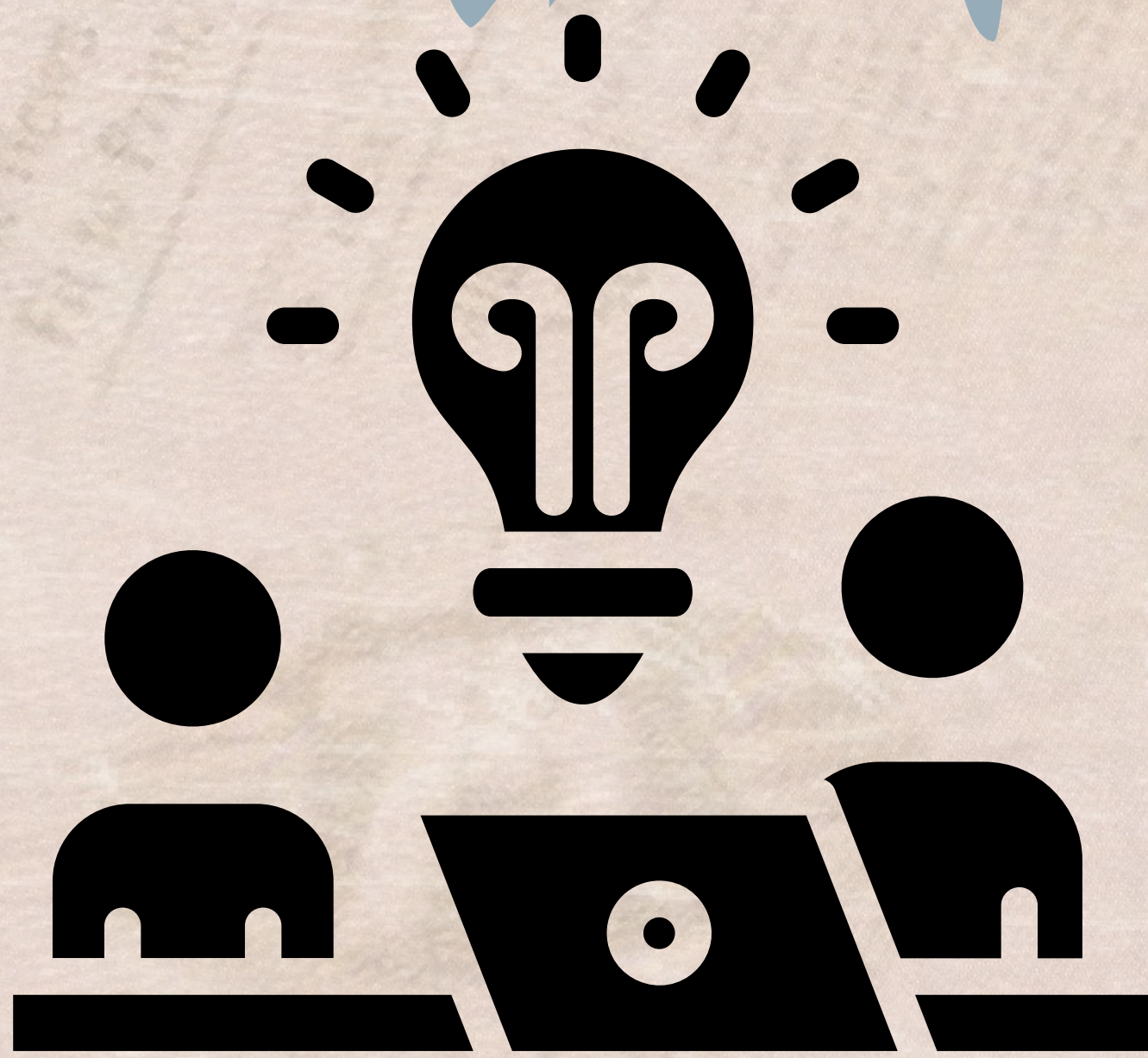
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TEACHER CORNER

FROM ALISON ONOFRIO

It can be difficult to find time during the day to teach social-emotional learning in high schools. Plus, high schoolers can be a tough audience to reach and engage with as they constantly strive to become more independent. So, activities that are about SEL for high school students must be authentic and relevant to their everyday lives.

High schoolers will want to see the direct connections to their real world, whether that be inside or outside of school. They will want the elbow space to express themselves, at times assert themselves, and challenge the “norm” as they form their own perspectives on the world around them.

Social and emotional learning can provide high school students with the skills and attitudes to support goal setting, a growth mindset, critical thinking, communication, career success, improved mental health, grades, and healthy relationships.



Social-Emotional Activities

For Every Classroom

Images from Kate Hadfield, Sarah Pecorino, DigKika, Arneke Pepin, Kaitlynn Albani, Marchelle's KG Zone, Educlicps

Pathway
2 SUCCESS

Daily Greetings 	Emotions Check-In 	Journal Writing 	Class Circle Time 	Morning Meeting 
Brain Breaks 	Gratitude List 	Mindful Morning Check-In 	Read Alouds 	Practice Coping Strategies 
SEL Chats 	End-of-the-Day Reflection 	Positive Affirmations 	SEL Art Activities 	Hold Class Meetings 
Weekly Goal Reflection 	SEL Skill of the Day or Week 	Show-and-Tell 	Shout Out Board 	SEL Quote of the Day 
SEL Crafts 	Practice Mindfulness 	Social Scenarios 	Play Games and Sports 	Daily Check-In Journal 
Daily Jobs 	AM / PM Check-In 	SEL Question of the Day 	Catch-Up and Organizing Time 	Group Challenges 

The end of class is the perfect time for reflection. That includes thinking about what went well, what students learned, what they are most proud of, and how they feel. Use targeted end-of-the-day reflection questions to start the process.

Self-Awareness Quotes:

"You are enough and a work in progress all at the same time."

"You are the hero of your own story."

"You are braver, smarter, and stronger than you think you are."

Self-Management Quotes:

"Name your emotions. Sit with them. Give them the space they deserve."

"You can't fast-track your success. You have to work for it."

"Let your biggest goals inspire you to do your best every day."

Social Awareness Quotes:

"Kindness doesn't cost anything, and yet it means everything."

"Just be kind. You never know what someone else is going through."

"How you treat others is a reflection of who you are."

Relationship Quotes:

"A true friend will accept your past and encourage your future at the same time."

"Apologizing doesn't make you weak; it makes you real."

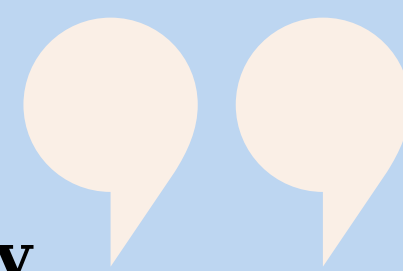
"Friendship is a two-way street."

Decision-Making Quotes:

"Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is looking."

"It's never too late to stop and go down a different path."

"You are free make a choice, but you are not free from the consequences of that choice."



SEL Quote of the Day

Quotes are character-building! Share a meaningful social-emotional quote on the board. Have students discuss and share what it means to them. Improves communication skills, team building, classroom community!!

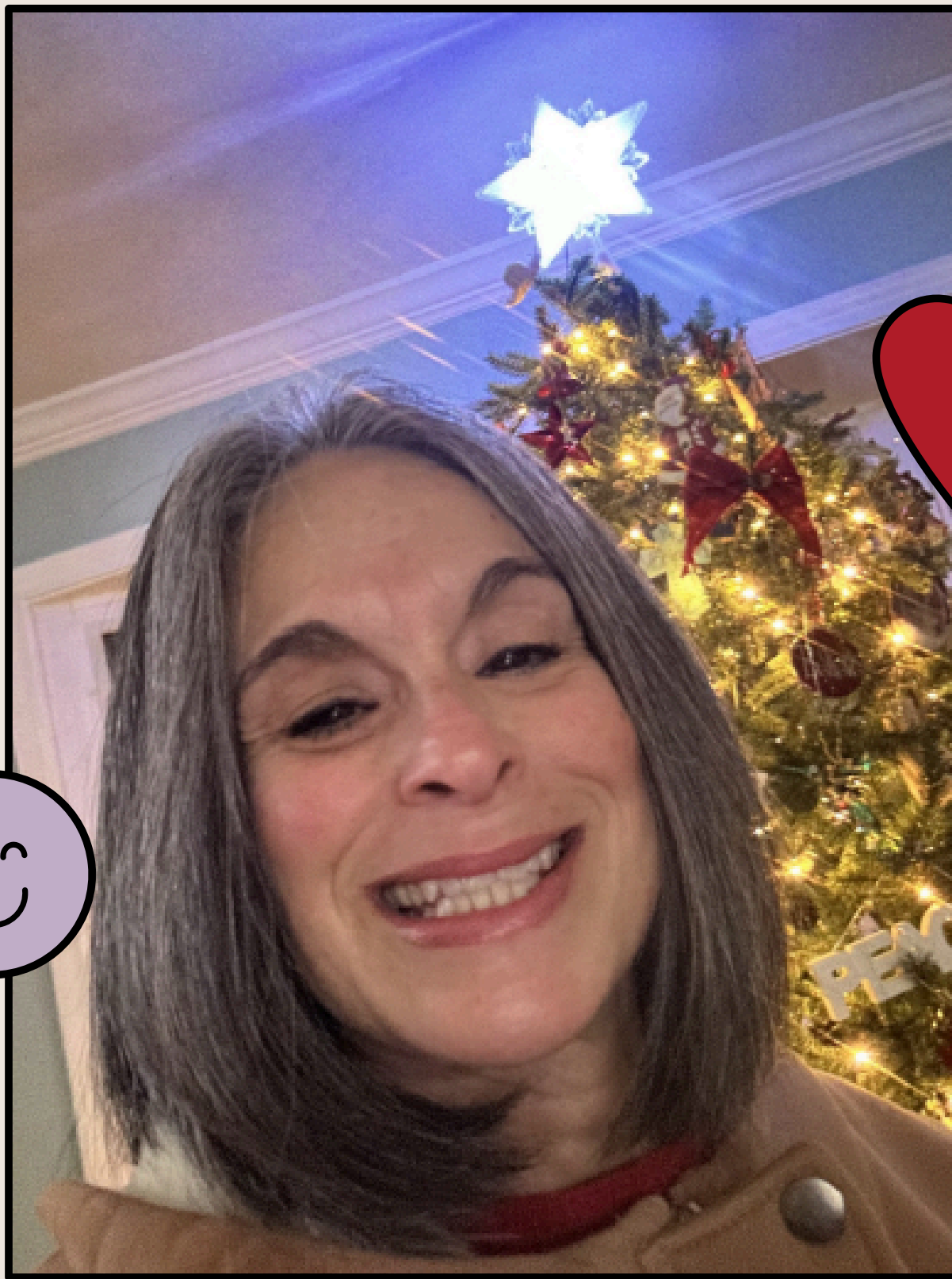
Reflection Questions

- What are you grateful for?
- How did you make others feel today?
- What positive choices did you make today?
- How did you give back to the world today?
- What made you smile today?
- How did you show honesty today?
- How did you show kindness today?
- How did you show Integrity today?
- How did you grow your brain today?



WELCOMING OUR NEW SOCIAL WORKER

Damaris Rodriguez, LCSW



F U N F A C T S :

- I speak Spanish
- I enjoy dancing salsa
- I am a mom of one and a grandmother of two
- I love dogs
- I love to eat, but I don't like to cook
- My favorite season is fall

I look forward to meeting you all!

