

# CAP Counselor's Corner

COMMUNITY ACADEMY OF PHILADELPHIA EST NEWS, VOL. 1 ISSUE 1

APRIL 2020

Dear CAP families,

We hope that everyone is staying healthy during this uncertain time. CAP's Emotional Support Team is excited to be putting out our first official EST newsletter. We hope to be sending out the newsletter to our CAP family three times during the academic school year. Since this is our first edition, we have plenty of awesome news and events to share that have taken place across the 2019-2020 school year so far.

CAP's Emotional Support Team is here to support our families in any way possible. If you need any extra support during this time, please feel free to reach out to your child's counselor at any time. If you are unsure of who to reach out to, someone will direct you to the assigned counselor for your student. Each of our counselor's will be having virtual "office hours" during the following times. This means we will be readily available to our email as follows:

Mondays: Ms. Rivera

Tuesdays: Mr. Arbogast

Wednesdays: Ms. Lora

Thursdays: Ms. Robinson

Fridays: Ms. Keil

\*If you are looking to speak with a different counselor on a given day, the assigned person will be able to get in contact with that person for you or your child.

We miss our CAP family and hope to see everyone soon,

The CAP Emotional Support Team

## Find your Child's Counselor:

Karen Boyle, Elementary School Clinical Counselor, 5th-8th

[Kboyle@communityacademy.org](mailto:Kboyle@communityacademy.org)

Rebecca Keil, Elementary School Counselor, K-4th

[Rkeil@communityacademy.org](mailto:Rkeil@communityacademy.org)

Lisette Rivera, High School Clinical Counselor, 9th-12th- bilingual

[Lrivera@communityacademy.org](mailto:Lrivera@communityacademy.org)

Morgan Arbogast, ES & HS Clinical Counselor

[Marbogast@communityacademy.org](mailto:Marbogast@communityacademy.org)

Danielle Robinson, HS Therapist

[Darobinson@communityacademy.org](mailto:Darobinson@communityacademy.org)

Julissa Lora, Social Worker and Truancy Officer, K-12- bilingual

[Jlora@communityacademy.org](mailto:Jlora@communityacademy.org)



## 6<sup>th</sup> graders explore the great outdoors, September 2019

In September, all sixth-grade students had the opportunity to go on a field trip to the Outward Bound Day School. Students traveled with Miss Keil, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, and their classmates to practice some team building and challenging obstacle courses. While there, students were divided up into groups of ten. In their groups, students participated in several different activities to challenge themselves. Many students favored the climbing course and zipline, while others preferred the challenges of the “on the ground” games. Each activity the students participated in required them to work together to complete the task. The Outward-Bound instructors reached out to tell CAP how happy they were with the student’s bravery, determination, and respect towards instructors. Miss Keil is already looking forward to going back with next year’s sixth grade class!



## STUDENTS CELEBRATE ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

October 2019

Students were reminded of CAP’s zero tolerance policy for bullying this year during Anti-bullying week from October 28- November 1. Each day, students had the opportunity to participate in a different anti-bullying activities. Activities included brainstorming ways to spread kindness, classroom lessons from our counselors, how to stand up to a bully, being an upstander, reporting bullying, sitting with new friends at lunch, and signing CAP’s anti-bullying pledge.





# MEET THE COUNSELOR



## CAP WELCOMES A NEW MEMBER TO OUR EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TEAM

"Hi everyone! My name is Karen Boyle and I am the newest member of the Elementary School Emotional Support Team. I started this past January and already feel like a member of the CAP family. I work with our middle school students in grades 5-8, but also love to spend time with our younger students.

I am from the Philadelphia suburbs and earned my Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Master's degrees in School Counseling K-12 and Professional Counseling from Rosemont College. I am a certified school counselor and recently earned my license in professional counseling. I have worked as a personal care assistant, middle school and high school counselor in the state of Colorado, behavior specialist, and outpatient therapist for children of all ages. I have also been a volleyball and basketball coach for girls in grades 5-12. I have spent so much time working with young people and hope to bring empathy, support, and experience to help the CAP community continue to grow and thrive!

In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my fiancé, friends, and family, especially my nieces and goldendoodles. I love to play basketball and volleyball and go to the beach. I look forward to meeting all of you and forming close relationships with our students, parents, and staff!"

## Blood Drive

CAP partners with American Red Cross to host student-run blood drive

"Approximately 36,000 units of blood are used each day in the United States. Every three seconds someone needs blood. Just one pint of donated blood can help save as many as three people's lives".

Special thanks to our CAP student blood drive volunteers: Athena Alvelo, Kerwayne Andrews, Miguel Arroyo, Oshelynn Cabrera, Gabriel Colon-Sierra, Nakemah Cromartie, Raynija Gonzalez, Juan Madera, Michael Messina, Sarahi Montanez, Leonel Moreno, Sebastian Resto, and Arlene Rios. These dedicated students helped make this year's blood drives a huge success. We were able to successfully collect 119 units of blood. That means we were able to help save as many as 357 lives!!! Awesome job!



## Truancy Reminders

Attendance is key to a child's success and we take all absences from school very seriously. Pennsylvania Law requires any student who has been absent from school to bring in a written note upon his/her return stating the reason for the absence.

### What is truancy?

In Pennsylvania, truancy is defined as when a child of compulsory school age is absent for three (3) or more days without a valid excuse. Please note: this does not mean three days in a row; it means any three days of unexcused absence.

\*Pennsylvania's Law is very strict and carries penalties for parents of truant students. If students are found to be truant, parents may receive a fine from the state for up to \$300 for the first offense and up to \$500 for the second and \$750 for the third and subsequent offenses, together with court costs and, upon default of payment, subjected to county jail up to three (3) days.

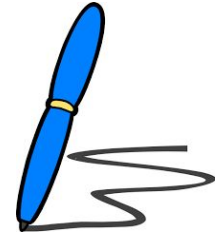
### There are several ways to excuse your child's absence

1. Send an email to [absent@communityacademy.org](mailto:absent@communityacademy.org).
2. Contact the attendance officer, [zlopez@communityacademy.org](mailto:zlopez@communityacademy.org) or the truancy officer [jlora@communityacademy.org](mailto:jlora@communityacademy.org).
3. Send in a medical note or a parent note with your child upon their return to school.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's attendance or to update any outstanding illegal absences, please contact Mrs. Lora at [jlora@communityacademy.org](mailto:jlora@communityacademy.org).

# Dear counselor...

Each issue our counselors will answer a common question that our students may have



**Question:** Dear counselor, I have been struggling with boredom since being in quarantine. How do you keep busy when you are stuck in the house?

**Answer:** Hi student, this is a really good question and something that many across the country and globe are challenged with. I have several ideas that will allow you to have a productive, engaging, and also relaxing stay at home. Let's start by asking ourselves the following questions...

1. Do I have anything that I need to get done? (*Examples chores, school work, essays, applications, cleaning, exercise, research something of interest*).
  2. Do I have anything that I want to get done? (*Examples rearrange my bedroom, go through old clothes that I can no longer fit, organize a space, video chat with friends, play my game, watch TV, work on a hobby related activity*).
- After you have created your lists, create a daily schedule that consists of 45 minutes to an hour-long slot. *For example, 10:00 am- 10:45 am or 10:00 am- 11:00 am.*
  - Create the schedule according to the time you wake up and the time you go to bed. Remember sleeping half the day away may not be a good idea.
  - Fill your schedule in with the activities you listed. Be sure to include food breaks, and things that you do to relax (some suggestions; yoga, meditation, calming crafts or coloring). YouTube has some awesome ideas for kid relaxation.

*Having a schedule for yourself can work wonders, especially when you stick to it. Just because we're not in school does not mean we don't need structure. Children and adults both can benefit from a personal daily schedule to occupy their day especially at this time while we're staying safe at home.*

*Take care of yourselves!*

## MENTAL HEALTH TOPIC OF THE MONTH: ANXIETY

Do you ever get butterflies in your stomach? Feel your heart beat faster and your breathing get quicker? Do your palms get sweaty? Do you ever think about leaving where you are and just wanting to go home? These are all signs of the feeling of anxiety. All of us can feel anxious but when the thoughts and feelings start to interfere with your life then you'll need some help. You are not alone, over 40 million people in the United States suffer from anxiety.



Feeling anxious can happen at any time. Do you feel anxious when thinking about starting the school day, who you're going to play with at recess or what your parents will say if you get disciplined by the teacher? Do you have trouble sleeping at night because you're thinking about what happened today and what might happen tomorrow?

If you feel anxious it's important to let someone know, like your parent, a teacher or a counselor. Don't worry, they will be able to help you learn how to deal with the feelings so they're not bothering you anymore.

# *Parents in the know:*

## Helping your child with Anxiety

Our emotions can easily feel big. *Too big*. So we usually do everything we can *not* to feel them. We think the emotions will destroy us. As neuropsychologist Judy Ho, Ph.D, writes in her book, [\*Stop Self-Sabotage: Six Steps to Unlock Your True Motivation, Harness Your Willpower, and Get Out of Your Own Way\*](#), “Usually negative or intense emotions seem scary because they feel amorphous. The lack of obvious boundary gives your mind the impression that it is never-ending, which can make us feel emotionally unsafe. Emotions like fear, sadness, anger, guilt, or shame can feel larger than life in many regards, because the only limit to them is how big and how scary our minds can make them!”

This is why Dr. Ho suggests “physicalizing” a difficult emotion. She notes that this “makes it easier to deal with [an overwhelming emotion] and makes it seem manageable, because any tangible object has a beginning and an end”.

[Dr. Ho](#) suggests using this specific technique when too-big emotions arise:

- § Sit comfortably, and take several deep breaths.
- § Imagine what a physical representation of your emotion would be. It might be anything from a blob of Play-Doh to a block of wood. Imagine gently pulling it out of your body.
- § Use your five senses to think of the object: What color is it? What about its size and shape? Does it feel smooth or rough, warm or cool, light or heavy? Does the object have a scent? If so, what does it smell like? If you were going to take a bite, what would it taste like? Would it be bitter, sour, salty, sweet, or a combination of these flavors?
- § Write down your description. You can even draw it.
- § Imagine holding the object in both hands.
- § Imagine you’re able to change its size, shape, and color, and anything else about it.
- § Imagine pushing and squeezing the object to the size of a pea. And then imagine putting it inside your pocket, wallet, or purse.

After you’ve diminished the intensity of the emotion, you can explore what it’s trying to tell you. What message is it sending? How can you act on that message in a constructive, healthy, productive way? For example, your anger might be a signal that you need to set a stricter boundary. Your loneliness might convey that you need to cultivate deeper connections.

Similarly, another approach is to do the opposite. This is a common technique recommended by clinicians (and included in Ho’s book) to ensure that negative emotions don’t rule your life. For example, instead of lashing out when you’re angry, you support someone. Instead of isolating when you feel sad, you invite a friend to lunch.

It’s hard to feel your feelings, but remember that you can turn to helpful strategies like the above to make the process a bit easier. The above technique is an important reminder that you can take something nebulous, overwhelming, and even scary, and transform it.

Because while the emotion may seem powerful, so are you.

# COMMUNITY ACADEMY OF PHILADELPHIA, CS STUDENT RESOURCES

We care about you and want to make sure you have the supports you need to be successful in school and in life. CAP has an in school emotional support team of counselors and social workers ready to assist. You can contact one of them for guidance and support. Still need more? Here are some outside supports in the community that can help:

## Crisis Response Center:

Worried you might hurt yourself or someone else?

### **Philadelphia Children's Crisis Response Center**

3300 Henry Avenue  
Falls Center 2, Suite 3N  
Philadelphia, PA 19129  
215-878-2600

## Outpatient Mental Health Support:

Feeling sad, nervous or angry and need to talk to someone about it?

### **PATH**

8220 Castor Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19152  
215-728-4565

### **Cora**

8540 Verree Road  
Philadelphia, PA 19111  
215-342-7660

### **Northeast Treatment Centers**

499 North 5th Street, Suite A  
Philadelphia, PA 19123  
215-408-4944

### **Warren E Smith Community Mental Health Center**

1315 Windrim Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19141  
215-456-2737

## Drug and Alcohol Inpatient/Outpatient Support:

Concerned you are becoming dependent on drugs or alcohol?

### **The Bridge**

1100 Adams Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19124  
215-342-5000

## Sexual abuse or assault Supports:

Do you have a history of sexual abuse or assault?

### **WOAR**

1617 JFK Boulevard Suite 800  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
215-985-3315

## LGBTQ Specific Supports

Would you like to be connected to a space that is supportive of LGBTQ Youth?

The Attic Youth Center  
255 South 16th Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
215-545-4331

**Ideas, questions, or topics you want covered in the next newsletter???**

**Reach out to any member of our Emotional Support Team to see what topic will be highlighted in the next issue!**