



NOVEMBER

Counseling Newsletter

Shift Responsibility

Q: *My student says I'm always "on their case," reminding them to do their homework and clean their room. I don't want them to feel like all I ever do is correct them. Help!?*

A: It may feel natural to give your student reminders. Try helping them understand that they are responsible for reminding themselves. Suggest they create a daily checklist that includes big jobs (doing their homework) and smaller ones (putting their shoes away). Or they could list their to-do tasks in their daily planner to keep organized. Giving them specific and positive feedback will also help. Rather than saying "You're doing great!" if they remember to complete their task without a reminder, try "I noticed how hard you were working on your Math assignment. I am excited to see how it will pay off on your upcoming Summative."

"Focus Here Please"

Is your student struggling to stay focused on academics during distance learning? Try to incorporate some of these strategies to assist in managing distractions at home.

- Utilize Headphones: Using headphones while engaged in live Zoom sessions help to limit outside noise and distraction.
- Designated Workspace: Help your student set up a space that is clear of clutter and only contains relevant school material.
- Turn Off Phone Notifications: Eliminate the temptation to check the phone by turning off push notifications during the school day.



SMART GOALS

Your student recently participated in a SMART Goal lesson during their MSM class. Ask them to share their second quarter SMART goal with you so that you can help them monitor and succeed! Research shows that most middle aged students would like to talk more with their family about their academic goals!



Important Dates

- November 11th – Veterans Day, MSM MAP Data Journals Lesson 1
- November 13th – Magnet Academy applications due (extended deadline)
- November 12th – Virtual Food Drive Starts
- November 18th – MSM MAP Data Journals Lesson 2
- November 23rd – Virtual Food Drive Ends
- November 25th to 27th – Thanksgiving Recess



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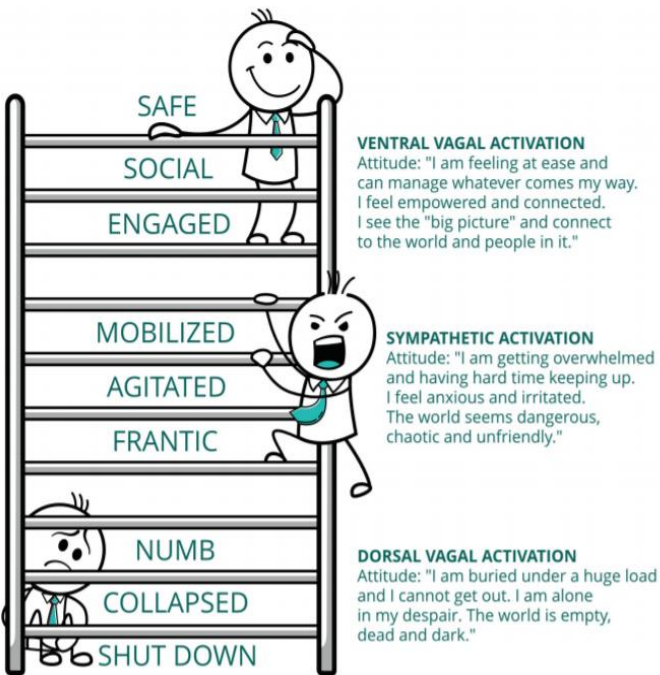
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At-Home Tips and Tricks

Is your student feeling overwhelmed, shut down, or anxious?

Think of it this way – We all have a “thinking brain” and a “survival brain.” When we are engaged with our thinking brain, we are curious, safe, unafraid to make mistakes, and are prepared to learn. When we are engaged with our survival brain, we are afraid to make mistakes, feel a sense of panic or numbness, and are not prepared to learn nor have productive conversations regarding our needs. In our current situation, many of us are spending more time in our survival brain. In order for us to have the drive and motivation to learn, grow, and have productive conversations, we need to be engaged with our thinking brain.

AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM AS A LADDER



Adapted from *The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy* by Deb Dana

- You don't need an office full of toys and fidgets to help your student engage with their thinking brain and stimulate their Vagus Nerve!

Have you tried?

- Deep Breathing – Smelling Essential Oils or Lemon or Orange – Chewing Crunchy Food – Mindfulness – Rubix Cube – Coloring – Blowing Bubbles – Tea or Ice Water – Physical Activity – Music – Finger Labyrinth – Chewing Minty Gum

A Mindful Minute

- Take a moment to notice how you are sitting or standing. Does your current position feel comfortable? Tense? Are you feeling distracted? Focused? Try adjusting your posture into a position in which your head rests comfortably on your spine, in an upright position, with both feet planted on the floor. Now breathe.

Word of the Month: Catastrophizing

- Catastrophizing is when we assume that the worst will happen. Often, it involves believing that we are in a worse situation than we really are. This takes us away from our thinking brain, making it difficult to focus on the realistic outcomes. Avoiding catastrophizing helps us to define realistic steps we can take to overcome obstacles. Help your student ask themselves, “Will this matter 5 minutes from now? 5 weeks from now? 5 months from now? 5 years from now?” This can help us to rationalize the situation and have productive conversations regarding our needs and concerns.

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