

# Counseling Corner

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COUNSELING &  
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## Negative News: How to Deal with it in a Healthy Way

Our country and global community has had a very troubling summer. It does not seem that we can turn on the radio, TV, or attend to our social media pages without being encountered by yet another tragedy. While these events of domestic and global terrorism, and natural disasters may not directly be happening here in our local community, the effects are rippling into our personal, social, and professional lives. Many of us may be struggling with understanding how these events can occur and why such terrible things can happen. Maybe we have children at home who are asking questions about these events, and we cannot seem to find the words to explain it to them. Perhaps we have become disenchanted by the leaders of our country, disappointed that each incident leads to further uncertainty. We may be having a hard time sleeping, finding an appetite, concentrating on a task, or trusting the person delivering a package to our house. Or maybe, trepidation is causing us to stay in the comforts of our own home instead of traveling, going out to social events, school, work and/or run errands.

In the office of Counseling and Student Success, we recognize that it is typical for all of us to experience a variety of emotions following a traumatic event. These feelings can include shock, sorrow, fear, anger, grief and numbness. In the wake of tragedy, after tragedy, it is a wonder how we can even think about living a daily, normal life, free of fear and worry for not only ourselves, but our loved ones. And while there may be more questions than answers as our country and global community attempts to recover and resolve its troubles, there are ways that we can take care of ourselves and strengthen our own resilience in the meantime.

The responsibility we have to take care of ourselves cannot be stressed enough. While the status of our world may be uncertain and events are unpredictable, the care that we provide for ourselves can always be constant if we are willing to work at it. When we take care of ourselves, we will find that we are more relaxed, we will feel less stressed, we will be able to take care of and help others better, sleep and appetite will come back in normal quantities, and we will handle unwelcomed news with more ease. Building resiliency and learning to properly take care of ourselves will take work, but here are some great tips to help get you started.

- **Strive for balance.** When tragedy occurs, it is easy to become overwhelmed and/or create a negative outlook of the world. Balance that perspective by reminding yourself of people and events that are meaningful and comforting to you.
- **Turn it off and take a break.** While it is great to stay informed, too much information can actually increase your stress. Limit the amount of news you take in, whether it is from your social media pages, the TV, radio, etc. Turn off the at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
- **Honor your feelings.** Remember that it is common to feel a range of emotions after a traumatic incident. Also remember that you may encounter others who disagree with you or say things that go against your beliefs and values. Do not allow them to discredit your emotions.
- **Take care of yourself.** Engage in healthy behaviors to enhance your ability to cope with excessive stress. Eat well-balanced meals, get plenty of rest, make room in your schedule for exercise, and try to get yourself on a routine. Avoid alcohol and drugs, as they may intensify your emotional and/or physical discomfort.
- **Help others or do something productive.** Locate resources in your community on ways you can help people who have been affected by the incident, or have other needs. Contributing to someone else's needs can help you feel better, too.
- **Have patience.** Remember that grief is a long process. Give yourself time to experience your feelings, thoughts and emotions and try to understand them. Taking the time to understand, take care of and appreciate ourselves will help us feel better prepared in case of another crisis.
- **Act, don't react.** It is easy to jump to conclusions at the moment of a crisis. When (if) another incident happens, honestly ask yourself if your reactions in the previous situation served you a purpose. If you felt more anxiety, stress and anger stemmed from the last reaction, position yourself to make smart, informed decisions.
- **Ask for support when you need it.** Ask for support from people who care about you and will listen to your concerns. If you are having a hard time finding that person, come to the C&SS office. Faculty and staff are offered a free and confidential counseling session. Our office also has access to a number of great resources in the community in which we can refer you to.

If you find yourself, or a student you encounter, struggling to make sense of recent events, please contact our office for a consultation.

### LOOK FOR OUR FUTURE EVENTS:

- Study & Test Taking
- Counselor Panel
- Time Management
- Choosing a Major & Career
- Matching a Major with Personality
- Stress Management
- Call Me Crazy movie viewing

### IMPORTANT NEWS

The Counselors are offering their time to come into classrooms and provide students a brief overview of all the services C&SS offers. Counselors are also available to speak on specific topics such as time management or stress reduction to name a few. If interested, please call (973) 328-5140.

## Office Yoga

It may be no surprise that sitting down for long stretches of time can wreck havoc on our health. Sitting too much has been related to both high blood pressure and obesity. That is why it is important to move throughout the day. Even if you cannot leave your office, finding a few minutes to do some simple stretches can do wonders for our bodies and minds, quickly relieving stress and anxiety that comes with a new school year!

Try this simple stretch adapted from yoga:

**Seated Twist Variation:** Sitting tall, ground down through the soles of your feet and inhale to lengthen the spine. Exhale and twist gently towards the right side. Grab hold of the arm rest and the back of the chair softly, lengthen up through the crown of your head. Pause at a depth of your twist where you can still keep the breath deep, and gaze over your right shoulder. Stay for 5-10 breaths. Gently untwist, pause with a neutral spine. Repeat the twist on the other side.



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## Understanding C&SS Better

County College of Morris, while a small school, truly has a lot to offer for its students, faculty and staff. Besides its first class education at affordable prices, CCM offers its community something that most county colleges do not: a Counseling office. The mission of the Office of Counseling and Student Success is to maximize a student's individual growth and development by assisting them toward greater maturity that includes openness to new experiences, self-awareness, self-acceptance, assuming responsibility for one's choices, and developing a philosophy of life. The C&SS office is staffed by Licensed Professional Counselors in the state of New Jersey who are fully equipped to provide personal, education and career counseling. However, the office understands that there can be misconceptions, misunderstandings, or just a lack of awareness of what the counseling staff actually does on a day to day basis, and what they are capable of doing. That is why C&SS is offering a discussion panel for students, faculty and staff. This panel is an opportunity for the community to meet the counselors, hear about the services provided, and even ask questions in a safe and judgement free space. Please feel encouraged to bring your class if you are teaching during that time, or encourage your students to attend on their own. The panel will have two sessions on Wednesday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am and again at 11:00am. The panel will be held in the Student Community Center, Davidson Rooms A&B.

## Counseling & Student Success Hosts Free Screening of Movie Highlighting Mental Illness

Many misconceptions exist about mental health. Messages persist that those who are diagnosed with a mental illness are often crazy, violent, unstable, and not appropriate for society. These messages become stigma, and presents itself as a major barrier for society to take the time to understand mental health, which consequently prevents those with mental illness from seeking the help they may need. The media has considerable influence on shaping public opinion; the negative depictions of mental illness in the media can play a role in perpetuating stereotypes, stigmas and misconceptions. When we learn that an individual has a mental illness, it is not uncommon for some to become totally uncomfortable, to perceive the person differently, or to turn the other way. There is a lot of misunderstanding of mental illness, and that misunderstanding leads to the mistreatment of those who have it.

Mental illness affects everyone in some way. We all likely know someone who has experienced mental illness at some point. Recent statistics dictate that one in five American adults will experience a mental health issue at a point in their lives; one in 10 young adults will experience a period of major depression; and one in 25 Americans live with a serious mental illness.

To help put an end to the misunderstanding, stereotypes, and stigma that our society has against mental illness, the office of Counseling & Student Success is hosting a free viewing of the critically acclaimed movie, *Call Me Crazy* on Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. The screening will take place at 3:30pm in room DH114. This movie is a compilation of five short stories surrounding mental illness with an all-star cast. The goal of this movie is to raise awareness of mental illness, the affects that it not only has on the individual, but on the individual's loved ones, and to establish a better appreciation of the seriousness of mental illness.

