

**COUNSELING &
STUDENT SUCCESS
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Counseling Corner

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LOOK FOR OUR FUTURE WORKSHOPS ON:

- Alternatives for Anxiety
- Career Choices
- Creating Healthy Relationships
- Effective Communication Strategies
- Send Silence Packing
- Strategies to Deal w/ Life
- Study/Test Taking Strategies
- Time Management Skills

IMPORTANT NEWS

The Project Success Program in the spring semester is currently in progress. If you have any questions about the Project Success program or about the role asked of professors, please contact John Urgola at (973) 328- 5140 or e-mail projectsuccess@ccm.edu.

Send Silence Packing: A Powerful Interactive Display On Suicide

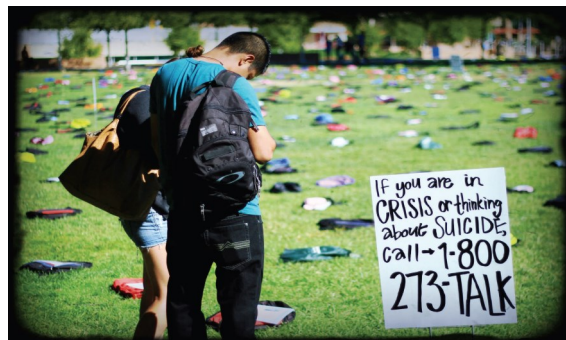
Thursday, April 30, 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. with Candlelight Vigil to Follow

Many people do not realize how prevalent suicide is among the college population. According to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students. In fact, "more than half of college students have had suicidal thoughts, and 1 in 10 have seriously considered attempting suicide" (Hass, Silverman, Koestner. Saving Lives in New York: Suicide Prevention and Public Health, Volume 2 Approaches and Special Populations. New York State Office of Mental Health, 2005 Nov.). In an attempt to educate the community, **CCM will be hosting Send Silence Packing on April 30 from 11:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. outside of the Student Community Center, with a candlelight vigil to follow.**

Send Silence Packing is an award-winning exhibit of 1,100 backpacks representing the 1,100 college students who die by suicide every year. The program was created by Active Minds, the leading national non-profit organization working to help engage students in the conversation about mental health.

A press release from Active Minds describes Send Silence Packing as a, "powerful outdoor exhibit that sheds light on college student suicide and promotes a healthy dialogue around mental health. To give a 'face' to the lives lost, personal stories and testimonies written by families and friends accompany the backpacks. Passersby will be invited to walk among the backpacks and read the stories of those who died. In addition, CCM's Active Mind's Chapter will be handing out literature on mental health, suicide prevention, and resources in the community" (activeminds.org).

Despite age, gender, race, culture, socio-economic status or upbringing, mental health challenges can affect all college-aged students. Anxiety, depression, and feeling overwhelmed for example, can make it difficult for college students to deal with obstacles and barriers in everyday life. These mental health challenges can also increase the likelihood of loneliness and isolation, potentially leading to suicide (Eisenberg, Golberstein, and Hunt, (2009) "Mental Health and Academic Success in College," *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*: Vol. 9 : Iss. 1 (Contributions), Article 40). Students say stigma is the major reason why they don't seek the help they need- the help that can save their lives (activeminds.org)- and raising awareness to all is the first step.



This effective and engaging exhibit encourages people to view mental health differently and facilitates the understanding of the repercussions that can occur if preventative practices and open discussions are not had. The County College of Morris is the first county college in the state of New Jersey to host Send Silence Packing and is open to all of the community. The event is sponsored by the Active Minds Club, Campus Life, Cultural Events, and Counseling & Student Success. The Counseling Office will be present at the exhibit in case students, faculty, or staff is in need of support. There will be a sign in sheet at the exhibit if you would like to have your students attend. If you have any questions, please call the Counseling Office at (973) 328-5140 or e-mail counseling@ccm.edu. For more information on Active Minds please visit activeminds.org.

Helping Domestic Violence Victims

Domestic violence has been at the forefront of national attention after a recent video surfaced of football player Ray Rice punching his then-fiancée Janay in an elevator. Domestic abuse is common throughout our society, occurring in all social classes, ethnic groups, sexual orientations, genders, cultures, and religions. People may fail to realize how common it is because very often abuse victims remain quiet. However, according to the Center for Disease Control and the National Institute of Justice, one in four women report experiencing domestic violence in their lifetimes.

Domestic violence exists on a continuum and can take many forms including physical assault, emotional, psychological, verbal, financial, and sexual abuse (clicktoempower.org). Some general warning signs of abuse may include unexplained bruises or injuries, and frequent or unexplained absences or missed assignments and obligations. There may also be a noticeable change in appearance or behavior. The individual may be constantly on their cell phone as their partner may require them to check in frequently to report what they are doing and where they are. A person may report receiving harassing phone calls or texts, and may talk about their partner's temper, jealousy, or possessiveness. They may also be restricted from seeing friends and family or have limited access to credit cards, money, or a vehicle. Psychologically, victims may suffer from low self-esteem, exhibit major personality or mood changes, and may be depressed, anxious, or suicidal (helpguide.org).

So what can you do if you suspect someone is in an abusive situation? Speak up and express your concerns. Victims of abuse may be too scared, confused, or ashamed to reach out for help, so initiating the conversation will encourage them to feel safe enough to express themselves. Here are some suggestions to help start the conversation:

- **Talk to the person in private and voice your concern for their situation and safety.** Point out specific things you have noticed that makes you worried, for example "'I noticed 'a, b and c' and I'm concerned about you. Is there something I can do to help?"
- **Reassure her/him that you are available to talk whenever they feel ready.** Talking about the abuse may be very difficult, and victims are often reluctant to immediately divulge about their situation. The most important thing you can do at that moment is to let him/her know that they are not alone, that abuse is not their fault, and that they have support and options.
- **Listen to and validate their experience instead of giving advice.** Offer support without judgment or criticism. Keep in mind that you cannot "save" or "rescue" the person. The individual needs to be in control of their own life decisions. Leaving an abusive relationship is difficult and involves many internal and external factors. A complex combination of psychological, cultural, religious, familial, and financial factors contribute to a victim's decision to remain in or leave an abusive relationship. Leaving often increases the risk of harm, and abusers may often escalate in their assaultive and coercive behaviors when the person is trying to separate. In fact, the majority of homicides occur when the victim has left the abuser or is attempting to leave. Therefore it is vital for victims to take their time and develop a safety plan before they leave the relationship.
- **Provide the person with resources and encourage him/her to get help.** As previously mentioned, the individual is the sole person in control of their own life decisions, but providing her/him with support and places to get help will empower them to take action.

If you suspect that a student or colleague is experiencing abuse, contact the Counseling & Student Success office to obtain resources and support in working with the person you believe may be in danger.

The Myths and Reality of the Late Withdrawal

What is a Late Withdrawal and who is eligible? Once the last day to withdraw, April 9, comes and goes, the college is officially in the Late Withdrawal period. This period is intended for students who have failed to withdraw before the withdrawal deadline because of extenuating circumstances. Since CCM gives students about 75% of the semester to withdraw, the only time a Late Withdrawal is appropriate is when extenuating circumstances have occurred **AND** documentation of the incident is provided. Some examples of extenuating circumstances include a death in the family or a student that has been hospitalized for any reason. The following does **NOT** constitute as permissible reasons for a late withdrawal:

- If a student forgot to withdraw even though they knew they were not attending class.
- A student failed to recognize that he/she was doing poorly in a class, or wanted to wait to see how they did on the next exam before withdrawing - when the withdrawal date has passed; students **CANNOT** complete a late withdrawal for this instance because it is not an extenuating circumstance.

Keep in mind that students are able to appeal for a withdrawal at any time after the semester has ended and a grade is given. In this case, a student must provide documentation and write a letter to either Dr. Bette Simmons or Dean Jan Caffie explaining why he/she is asking for a withdrawal. Please call (973) 328-5140 with any further questions.