

YOUTH: Counselors can help students connect with resources

Continued from page 1

of depression and isolation. Others have battled a lack of motivation and inability to focus and thrive.

Sisters High School Counselor Lindy Gilbert says that the loss of normal structure and routines demanded a lot of flexibility from students, as well as coping with ambiguity, which at the least can be exhausting, and, for some, overwhelming.

“Structure tends to help people feel safer and more confident,” she said.

Sisters Elementary School Counselor Kate Kuitert agrees.

“I think schools are the hub and the heart of the community and for our families,” she said. “Beyond the education

that happens within these walls, it is a place of stability, routine, connection, and relationships for our students and families.”

According to Gilbert, now that middle and high school students are back in the building at least part-time, they have a bit more ready access to the school counselors who often serve as the first line of resource for students and families dealing with social and emotional challenges.

Counselors have reached out to students in many ways over the past year, but also encourage students and families to never hesitate to ask for help.

“It’s still not like normal to where students can just drop in, but we are able to connect with kids much more easily now we are back in the building,” said Gilbert. “We want students and families to know that they can email or call in to make appointments any time

during regular school hours.”

As part of the connection process, Gilbert and other staff members organized “cafes” for freshmen and sophomores as students returned to in-person learning. Each student met with an adult for 10 to 15 minutes as a “check-in” that included talking about social/emotional wellness.

“We felt it was important to see kids eye-to-eye and get a read on how they were doing,” she said. “The kids have proven to be very resilient through the pandemic and a number have indicated the need for a little extra support as well.”

Yet, the schools can’t provide everything students need and school counselors can only do so much, which is why they often serve as resource brokers for families that are looking for other professional help available to the public. Additionally, mental-health crises can spring up at

any time, day or night, which requires specialized resources and ease of access.

Gilbert, Kuitert, and Sisters Middle School Counselor Brook Jackson have compiled a list of resources to help children and families find support for not only coping, but growing, during these trying times. The list is not 100 percent comprehensive, but contains many of the most important resources in the area, according to Jackson.

“This is my ‘go-to’ list,” he said. (See “Resources for health and well-being” below.)

The resource list includes everything from general mental-health support, to care for grief, substance abuse, suicide prevention, and other crisis situations.

Two recent additions to

the crisis services available in Central Oregon include the Stabilization Center in Bend, which is an alternative to the practice of going directly to the emergency room or having only a police response.

The second is the Mobile Crisis Assessment Team (MCAT), which can come to a location where a person is having a mental-health crisis.

“While most students may not be in crisis, there are many who would benefit from counseling support,” said Gilbert. “We are blessed to have a variety of private practitioners right in Sisters, as well as in Bend and Redmond.”

“The school counselors in Sisters are highly motivated to assist students and families to find the care they need,” she said. “We are here to help.”

Resources for health and well-being

General health

- Sisters School-Based Health Clinic (next door to Sisters High School): 541-526-6623. Serves newborn through age 20.

Crisis and call lines

- Deschutes County 24-hour Crisis Line: 541-322-7500 ext. #9.

- Deschutes County Stabilization Center: 541-585-7210. Located at 63311 Jamison St., Bend. For current hours of operation, visit www.deschutes.org/health/page/crisis-services.

- MCAT (Mobile Crisis Assessment Team) can be activated for someone in the midst of a mental health crisis. Call the Crisis Line at 541-322-7500 ext. #9 or 911.

- National Suicide Prevention LifeLine: 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text “273Talk” to 839863. Veterans press #1, for Spanish language calls 1-888-628-9454 or text “MIL1” 839863.

- Oregon YouthLine: 877-968-8491 or text “teen2teen” to 83983.

- Trans LifeLine: 1-877-565-8860.

- The Trevor Project (LGBTQ Youth): 1-866-488-1386 or text “START” to 678678.

Counseling resources (public, nonprofit)

- Deschutes County Behavioral Health: 541-322-7500.

- St. Charles Behavioral Health Services: 541-706-2768.

- Lutheran Community Services Northwest — Bend: 541-323-5332.

- OSU-Cascades Free Counseling Clinic in Bend: call 541-322-2047 or email cascades.counseling@osu-cascades.edu.

- Mosaic Medical Behavioral Health Hotline: 541-408-9562.

Substance Abuse

- Best Care Treatment Services: 541-504-9577 (substance abuse support).

Private practitioners

- Central Oregon Mental Health Providers Directory: www.preventsuicideco.org/provider-directory.

Note: There are a variety of practitioners based in Sisters.

Bereavement/Suicide Support

- Bend Area Suicide Bereavement Group: meets the second Monday of the month, 7-8:30 p.m. Email Alison Sorenson, alisonsorensoncounseling.com.

- The Compassionate

Friends: meets the first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. (except December). Contact Carol Palmer at carolpalmerrn@icloud.com or 541-480-0667.

- Individual Grief Support: Partners in Care offers short-term individual support counseling sessions to those who have experienced a death of a loved one. Call Partners in Care at: 541-382-5882.

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Health Conversations Program: <https://afsp.org/healing-conversations>.

- Dougy Center (based in Portland), help@dougy.org and 503-775-5683.

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Ray's Food Place

Pacific Rock Cod Filets

\$5.99 per lb.

Yoplait Yogurt

10 for \$5, 6 oz. selected

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