

BVPAGE Meeting 11/1/2019

Finding Gray in the World of Black and White

Board members present: Amy, Jeannie, Heidi

Special Guests: Kristin Asquith, Mark Schmidt, Blue Valley Counselors: Kristi Dixon (BVSU), Trish Madsen (Harmony Middle School), Jessica Adair (Sunset Ridge Elementary)

Shawnee Mission Special Education: Sherry Dumolien, Kristine Martin, Jennifer Dancer

Attendance: 19

- I. Welcome and updates
 - A. KGTC Award of Excellence for Outstanding Contribution
 - B. Next meeting Tuesday, December 3rd 9 a.m. at Pilgrim
 - C. Summer Opportunities Fair on Thursday February 6th
 - D. Please vote for school board members and JCCC trustees on November 5th
- II. Blue Valley Bond Vote 2020 information – Asst. Superintendent Mark Schmidt
 - A. \$186,835,000 being asked for going toward facilities updates, security, and new programs
 - B. No tax increase to pay for it
 - C. Need to be registered to vote by December 27th if you're not already a registered voter
 - D. Ballots go out on January 8th. Need to mail in response by January 28th at noon
- III. Finding Gray in a World of Black and White – Blue Valley Counselors (SEE ATTACHED PRESENTATION)
 - A. There is a significant jump in and depression. 37% increase in Major Depressive Episodes across all adolescent since 2005
 - B. Traits of gifted kids – imagination, sensitivity, empathy, powers of observation, higher level thinking, asynchronicity, perfectionism, acute sense of justice
 - i. While some kids handle some of these things naturally, gifted kids often need to be explicitly taught that
 - ii. Giftedness may show more in these areas than in academics
 - iii. Strategy: Overwhelmed with emotion/self regulation- teach them that their feelings are their super power and that when your cape is showing (you're out of control), you need a break to go tuck it back in. (ex. Arrange with the teacher "I need a drink")
 - iv. Asynchronicity
 1. One size does not fit all
 2. "judgement lags" video of James Webb
 3. It can mask what's really happening – angry and defiant may mean anxious and overwhelmed
 4. May drift toward adults and older kids than peers because they are more comfortable
 5. Need to help them find skills to refocus
 - a. (5,4,3,2,1,) 5 things I can see, 4 things I can hear, etc.
 - b. We need to model how we handle that -it's easy for the kids to say "it's just me and I'm crazy"
 - v. Intensity – misdiagnosis of ADHD, Autism, Depression
 - vi. Rigid thinking vs. Flexible Thinking

vii. Managing Intensity

1. Accept the intensity- don't feel like you have to fix it, they have to learn to manage it
2. Stress appropriate social skills
3. Short intellectually challenging activities (morning boxes- once they were totally ready for school)
4. Hands on kinesthetic activities
5. Task analysis and time management – creating a calendar of smaller due dates, learning to say no to too many activities
6. Assistance with transitions and identifying triggers- moving from one activity to the next
7. Counseling about intensity – if they are hesitant, let the counselor know and they can do play therapy, sand tray therapy, research intensities and do a presentation in gifted class. If you need outside resources, counselor should have a packet of community professional contacts

viii. Stress vs. Anxiety

1. Fear = stress response from immediate danger
2. Anxiety = Stress response just from your thoughts. No external response.
3. Brain structure
 - a. Weak: Prefrontal cortex isn't done growing until 26/27: thinking, logic, what to do evaluation (everything is ok)
 - b. Strong: Hippocampus is memory and emotions and Amygdala is fight or flight and stores memories of the event
 - c. Unexpected behaviors or overreaction is when the brain misfires in these places
4. Book recommendation: Fantastic Elastic Brain and Hey Warrior
5. Important to label the feelings by name or color (esp. for boys)
6. Is it Chronic – pattern long period of time; How severe is it compared to others?
7. Anxiety looks like lots of different things: tension, competitiveness, withdrawal, underachievement, arrogance, impatience, inappropriate outbursts, hyper behavior—many of which don't go over well with peers
8. Finding the line of where to advocate and where to let it be
9. The heaviness of expectations all day long by themselves and others
10. Remember it's ok you don't have all the answers
11. What does anxiety sound like: All or nothing thinking, jumping to conclusions, catastrophizing, personalization, perfectionistic thinking, disqualifying the positive, overgeneralization, mental filter
12. They just may not find their peer group in middle school – there is nothing wrong with that
13. They're not rational because their brains aren't developed yet and society has changed

ix. What can we do?

1. Model respect – respond to inappropriate remarks with humor
2. Non-judgmental language
3. Model leading with love

4. Promote here and now thinking- we are not responsible for their happiness—give them down time
 5. Celebrate the work in process rather than solely the outcome- back off the grades and homework
- x. Friendship
1. Personal space, volume, social skills, eye contact are not innate – teach it
 2. Share your own struggles with friendships
 3. 1 in 1 out – need a kid who has you back in school and one out of school
 4. Understand conflict is a normal and natural part of relationship (inflexibility isn't endearing)
 5. Share traits that make for your own genuine friendship
 6. Encourage them not to give up on connections with peers
 7. Positive or negative chart or friendship vacations
- xi. Strategies
1. Validate their feelings- for boys, often underneath anger is grief
 2. Cue transitions well
 3. Help your child see the gray of ethical issue, debates or conflicts around them
 4. Don't project about their future, they won't always be like this
 5. Back off from micromanaging school work, especially in middle school
 6. Celebrate failure
 7. Ask before you advocate