Welcome to the VPVA Newsletter!

The RBHS Office for Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA) is a free and confidential resource that provides services regarding sexual violence, dating violence, stalking, and harassment for the RBHS community.

Our focus for February is centering ourselves on self-care! We will be sharing tips on maintaining mindfulness, creating boundaries with saying "no" and erasing problematic behavior in the workplace.

Centering on Self-Care
8 Areas Of Practice Where You Can Show That You Care About You

**Emotional:**
- Make time to reflect on your feelings.
- Practice self-compassion.
- Show generosity and kindness.
- Enhance your emotional literacy/maturity

**Physical:**
- Move your body!
- Stretch, exercise.
- Listen to your body needs.
- Get enough sleep
- Eat healthy or nourishing food.
- Let your body rest

**Social:**
- Practice saying no.
- Honor your commitments to others.
- Ask for help when you need it.
- Spend time with loved ones.

**Spiritual:**
- Honor your belief values.
- Take time alone.
- Meditate, do yoga; practice mindfulness.
- Connect with the universe or nature.

**Personal:**
- Discover your true identity.
- Love who you are, quirks and all.
- Participate in activities that matter to you.

**Space/Environment:**
- Declutter your home and work space.
- Maintain a clean & safe living environment.
- Monitor technology time.

**Financial:**
- Have a conscious relationship with your money.
- Spend and save wisely.

**Professional/Science:**
- Take breaks when needed them.
- Negotiate for your needs.
- Contribute to a public space.
- Aim for learning opportunities.

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**We Support.**
We believe. We respond.

*When we support and care for ourselves, we can better support others.*
Mindfulness and Trauma

Trauma occurs when an overwhelming event, like interpersonal violence, creates a strong emotional and body response from which it is often hard to recover. Since research shows that trauma has such an impact on both the body and mind, mindfulness practice is a more popular treatment for survivors. Mindfulness involves bringing intentional awareness to our thoughts, feelings, body, and the surrounding environment in the present moment. Mindfulness includes an attitude of acceptance and curiosity to pay attention to our thoughts without judging them. Examples of mindfulness include body scanning, breathing exercises, meditation, yoga, and sense-focused activities. Practicing mindfulness can actually change portions of the brain, including the region that controls the body response to stress. Mindfulness can be practiced on your own by being more present in whatever activity you are participating in or with guided practice through the use of apps or professional support. Check out the Calm, Headspace, and Mindfulness Daily apps! ¹,²

E.R.A.S.E.

Health professionals sometimes encounter inappropriate or problematic behavior from their patients. When this happens, those entering or established in the field can take action against harassment or mistreatment. This month we’re focusing on mistreatment by patients/clients/consumers that can include any behavior that shows disrespect for the dignity of others and interferes with the helping process. ERASE is a helpful acronym that details a practical approach for recognizing and addressing mistreatment by patients. The framework has five elements.³
Mistreatment is any behavior, intentional or not, that shows disrespect for the dignity of others and unreasonably interferes with the learning or helping process.

**Examples include:**
- Sexual harassment
- Discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation
  - Humiliation
  - Stalking
- Physical or emotional abuse

**Equip**

Equip health professionals with warning signs of mistreatment by patients. Start early in planning for safety/protection if mistreatment occurs.

**Recognize**

Recognize how patients treat you. Mistreatment by patients can range from overt verbal abuse to micro-aggressions to sexual harassment disguised as “compliments.” Be mindful of how patients treat you, your colleagues, trainees, and staff.

**Address**

Address the mistreatment in the moment. Consider your goal, your relationship with the person, the context and your tone. Use appropriate and clear language. You can say something like, “Your comments are making me uncomfortable.” Setting boundaries early may lessen the chance of an incident escalating.

**Support**

Support your colleagues when you see concerning behavior. Check in with your colleagues when you see or suspect mistreatment. Say something like, “That was a challenging situation. How are you feeling?” Seek support from a colleague or supervisor if you need further assistance.

**Establish/Encourage**

Establish a positive culture. Encourage an environment that supports hearing concerns about mistreatment or harassment. Approach your institutions about developing workshops and training modules for how to handle patient mistreatment (e.g. guides, policies, reporting mechanisms).

Practice Saying No

Contribution by Taylor Corsi, RWJMS student and RBHS VPVA Ambassador

While helping others can be rewarding and is an important piece to the self-fulfillment puzzle, “saying yes” can be counterproductive when it imposes on your well-being. The fear of saying no is often what stops us from doing so, even when saying yes is harmful or we are overloaded with responsibilities and mental/emotional engagements. The author of the footnoted article provides several suggestions for how to become better at saying no:

1. Create a pause in your conversations: this will allow you the time needed to weigh whether or not this engagement is worth taking on.
2. Find a way to include your desire to help but your inability to do so when you are saying no; it can help lessen your stress about denying a request.
3. Use the empty chair method: practice saying no and envision the person you must say it to in front of you. This can help you overcome any stress or fear related to not fulfilling the requests of others.

These are important tools you can utilize to help you strengthen your “no” muscles, which can lead you to habits and decision-making that are in the best interest of your wellness. This can help you maintain a level of health that will allow you to say yes to yourself and others in the future.\(^4\)

Upcoming Events
Come see us at our upcoming tabling events:

2/19  11:00am-1:00pm  MSB @ NJMS
2/24  1:30pm-3:30pm  GA Level Bergen @ SN
2/25  11:30am-1:30pm  Courtyard @ RWJUH

Now, Cross It Out!

In honor of Black History Month, check our themed crossword puzzle.
CLICK HERE!

Not sure how you did last month? Here are January's answers!
References: