

PEER BIAS LEADERS NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2021

Welcome to the Peer Bias Leaders Newsletter. We are the Peer Bias Leaders, a student-led equity and inclusivity group at Haddonfield Memorial High School. Each month, we plan to release a monthly newsletter curated by students discussing the importance of equity through books, articles, discussion topics, and more. With this newsletter, we hope to foster conversations and self-education that act as the foundation for change within our community.

This month we wanted to cover the impact on students coming back to school after quarantine due to COVID-19. As we are now a month into school, we wanted to share resources and information. Stress, anxiety, and loneliness have been amplified during quarantine. We are all working together to adapt to the new environment in school.

-Mia Gagliardi, President of The Peer Bias Leaders

Discussion Topics:

- ***Students coming back to school full time while Covid is still happening***

- [Kids Head Back to School—and Bring Covid-19’s Mental-Health Scars With Them](#)

This article covers the stress that comes with heading back to school. Not only are schools focused on the learning gaps that resulted from COVID-19, but also the effects that COVID-19 had on students’ mental health. These links can provide a deeper dive to the questions that everyone has about what can be done to help students during this difficult time.

- ***Stress in and out of the classroom***

As we all know school can be stressful. There are many ways to be successful in school but by far the most important way is managing stress. We all have a lot to do in highschool but to get the most joy and fun out of all of our activities is maintaining our stress levels. These links can help you figure out the source of your stress and how to control it.

- <https://www.healthline.com/health/stress/stress-management-school#stress-management-skills>
- <https://www.verywellmind.com/top-school-stress-relievers-for-students-3145179>

- ***School violence and awareness***

School Violence Awareness Week this year is the week of October 18th. School violence can be anywhere from bullying and cyberbullying to school shootings. It is important to raise awareness for it because events of violence, especially school shootings, are happening more often in recent decades. These links help provide resources for preventing school violence, and the detrimental effects of school shootings.

- [Preventing School Violence | Violence Prevention|Injury Center](#)
- [Effects of School Shootings | Center for Violence Prevention](#)

Podcasts of the Month:

- [School's In: Student Stress During the Pandemic](#) (7:35)

At the Stanford Graduate School of Education, Denis Pope and Dan Schwartz discuss one of the largest national research projects, shedding light on the pandemic's impact on student connection, engagement and mental health.

- [One Year Later: Back-to-School Anxiety During COVID-19 - Shrinking It Down - MGH Clay Center for Young Healthy Minds](#)

This podcast covers the stress that comes with the transition from online school to in-person school. A normal school year is often stressful for students, and COVID-19 has added extra concerns to this. This podcast addresses some ways that parents can help to support their kids during this difficult time.

- [The Mindful Minute on Apple Podcasts](#)

A helpful tool for dealing with stress is meditation. This podcast walks through simple meditations that are very beginner friendly. These podcasts can help to relieve stress and teach a person how to live more in the moment.

Resources:

- [Easing Back-to-School Stress](#)
- [Back-to-School Anxiety](#)
- [Coping With Back-to-School Anxiety During COVID-19](#)
- [TEDTalk: Helen Sadler: Helping Children Through Fear and Anxiety](#): “Helen shares the story of becoming a children's author, as a way to help children and their families through difficult times.”
- [TEDTalk: Mindfulness in Education to Lower Stress and Violence](#): “Children today have never known a world without school shootings, stress, and anxiety. While some advocate gun laws and public policy — teenager Adam Avin founded Wuf Shanti, to teach children and teens mindfulness and social emotional learning, necessary life skills that help create a path to peace by helping kids grow up to be kind, healthy, well-functioning, and empathetic adults.”

Student Corner:

HMHS students were interviewed about how they dealt with beginning-of-the-year stress, especially coming back from a covid-19 year. Their responses are noted below:

Q: What was the most challenging part of coming back to school this year?

A: “Realizing I was going to be in school all the time and I had to make up for the lack of effort I put in last year. Also just realizing it was my junior year already was weird because I felt like I wasted the two before” -HMHS Junior

Q: How did you manage the stress of covid-19 and the start of a new year?

A: “At first I didn't realize how it helped, but talking to my friends and doing physical exercise” -HMHS Senior

Q: Was back to school in any way easier or more enjoyable?

A: “In my opinion, back to school was not easier just because it was a big adjustment to go from mostly all-virtual to be back in school totally” -HMHS Junior

Q: How have your stress levels changed since coming to high school?

A: “We have to concentrate on our work a lot more than in middle school since it really matters now, and we’re here full time” -HMHS Freshman

Quote of the Month:

“It’s all about finding the calm in the chaos” -Donna Karan

