

PRIMHE NEWSLETTER

Preparing Rural Inclusive Mental Health Educators



Recruiting and Retaining High-Quality School-Based Mental Health Professionals
for High-Need and Rural Schools in Tulare County



Bi-Annual Newsletter

Fall 2024

Tulare County Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools



Hello Readers! This newsletter is intended to inspire and bring awareness.

Welcome to our PRIMHE newsletter! We are thrilled you're here. Firstly, we would like to express our gratitude to our PRIMHE candidates, partners, and TCOE leaders who have continued to support our newsletter.

Each fall and spring, our wonderful team of PRIMHE graduate students come together to offer our readers insightful information, resources, and strategies to promote mental well-being among students, families, and educators. This year, we welcome our newest partners, TCOE's School Counselor Residency Program, managed by Leslie Kelly!

To the right, you can reference this issue's topics written by our PRIMHE graduate interns and school counselor residency candidates. To learn more about the PRIMHE program, scan the QR code on the front page or click here: [TCOE | PRIMHE](#)

Finally, we encourage you to share our newsletter with family, friends, and colleagues. We welcome ideas for future topics and can support your effort to promote mental wellness and academic success. Click on the following link should you have any information or resources that would be helpful to our community: [PRIMHE Newsletter \(google.com\)](#).

Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of those who need it most. Thank you for your continued support!

Enjoy this fall's newsletter!

Dr. Rosie Racion Hernandez, LSW, PPSO



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PARENTING HACKS

The sign of great parenting is not the child's behavior. The sign of truly great parenting is the parents' behavior. -Andy Smithson

A parent is a child's first teacher, the first meaningful relationship, and often the keeper of a child's triumphs and disappointments. A parent is essential to the growth and health of a child's ability to phase from childhood and adolescence into early adulthood. The role is challenging yet so rewarding! We are here to offer five quick parenting hacks to ease some of the day-to-day stressors many parents face.

Five Hacks to Increase Connection and Decrease Stress

"Time In" parenting is a strategy that empowers children to learn to self-manage when they have big emotions or face challenges. Parents take a sideline stance, offering options on how to regulate their feelings and thoughts but ultimately allowing the child to self-regulate and problem-solve. An example would be asking questions like, "It seems like you are angry right now. What do you need in this moment?" or sitting near your child crying, providing physical comfort, and allowing for silence until they are ready to talk.

Have too many toys? Try incorporating a toy rotation! Simply place and store most of your child's toys in a large storage bin, leaving 4-8 toy options in their room/play area. This will allow children to increase their creativity by using a smaller selection of toys at a time, which will encourage them to engage deeper with and play with each toy. When they appear disinterested in the toy(s), replace it with another one from the bin.



Practice and teach time management skills. Whether for yourself, a toddler, or a teen, time management is an important life skill. Modeling is key! Time management empowers you and your family to prioritize tasks and make values-based decisions, leading to more free time, less stress, and greater well-being. Visual supports can help. Try by color-coding a clock or creating a weekly checklist for the family.



Practice self-care to help "keep calm" through challenging times. If you need help figuring out where to start, consider reading *Self-care for Parents* by Sian Chambers-Vallence and Tony Vallence. The book includes various self-care activities that help parents alleviate stress. Practicing self-care can build stronger bonds with your child and foster better connections with them.

Build a support system! The saying is true: it takes a village to raise a child. Who is a part of your village? Strengthening your insight through other parents' experiences can be very helpful. *Dr. Shefali's Parenting and You!* is a free podcast on Spotify that focuses on self-awareness and offers tools and insights on tackling daily parenting challenges.



RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Parent Stress Line offers a free and safe place for parents to talk about their challenges and receive kindness and understanding (1-800-632-8188)

Parenting Network offers parenting classes, a parent partner program, support groups, and more locally! (559) 625-0384





CHANGE YOUR INTERNAL DIALOGUE, CHANGE YOUR MINDSET

A growth mindset can help build resilience, increase performance, and develop a positive attitude toward learning and self-improvement.

What is a growth mindset?

A growth mindset believes skills and intelligence can grow and improve with effort and practice. With a growth mindset, challenges are seen as chances to learn and improve rather than feeling discouraged or giving up.

What is a fixed mindset?

A fixed mindset believes that abilities and intelligence are set in stone and unable to change or improve. This often results in people avoiding challenges, giving up easily, and feeling jealous or threatened by the success of others.

Change your thoughts! Write a positive statement for each problematic or distressing situation—something you can tell yourself will help you get through. Write it down on paper and carry it with you, reading it throughout the day to reinforce a growth mindset.

Develop a growth mindset!: <https://www.perts.net/programs/hg>

"Reframe thoughts to develop a growth mindset"



Critical Elements for a Growth Mindset



Embrace challenges:
You're more likely to take on demanding tasks because they can help you grow.



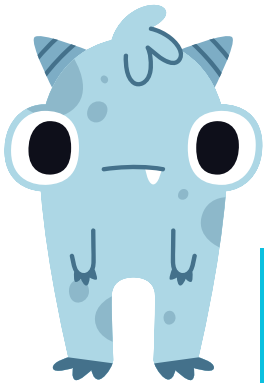
Learn from feedback:
View constructive criticism as helpful advice that can help you improve.



Be persistent: Keep trying instead of quitting when things get complicated.



Get inspired by others:
Mentorship is powerful. Find motivation in other's success.



GRIEF CREATURE



Finding Support: Resources for Grief and Healing

What is Grief?

Grief, as defined by the American Psychological Association, encompasses the deep anguish experienced after losing a significant person in one's life. This emotional response can manifest in various ways, including confusion, anxiety, obsession with the past, and concerns about the future. Grief has the potential to cause severe disruptions in a person's life, such as self-neglect, weakened immune system, and suicidal thoughts. It is essential to recognize that grief and loss are unique to each individual and can occur not only through death but also through other significant changes, such as moving to a new school, a grandparent developing Alzheimer's disease, or the end of a relationship.

Understanding How Children Grieve by Age:

Ages 5-8: Children within this age range might have difficulty grasping the whole concept of death. They often believe that the person or thing they lost can come back. At this age, you can explain the loss of a person or thing through storytelling. Children often regulate their emotions through play. Allowing them to create art, play games, and be outdoors helps them to process thoughts and feelings they may not be able to verbalize.

Ages 9-13: At this age, children may or may not be able to fully understand the permanence of the loss of a person or thing. When they ask questions to try to understand, answering them honestly in age-appropriate ways is essential. While challenging, talking directly to a child about death allows them to manage grief better in the future.

Ages 14-18: Teenagers have a clearer understanding of the permanence of death. However, they might have a difficult time expressing themselves and communicating their feelings effectively. Teenagers can either shut down and isolate, become angry and irritable, or act out. Either way, allow them to seek support from those with whom they feel more comfortable sharing and offer them a safe space.



Grief Activity: Grief Creature

It can be challenging to find the right words or methods to explain to a child or loved one that someone has passed away. The [Dougy.org](https://www.dougy.org) website offers numerous resources and peer support guides to help children and adults cope with grief and loss. When you're grieving, expressing your emotions can be challenging, but engaging in various activities might help you process and navigate those feelings. The following activity is an easy yet powerful way to help your child express their feelings of grief. All you need for this activity is a blank paper and crayons/markers.

1. Start by drawing a cave for your creature.

2. **Next, draw your grief creature.** Ask questions, such as: What does it look like? Is your creature big, like the size of the cave, or small? How does it sound? What does it do? Is it friendly? Angry? Sad? Does your creature have a name? Note: You can use color to describe a grief creature, such as black to represent sorrow or yellow to represent remnants of happiness.

Although grief has a negative connotation, it can bring families together and offer opportunities for connection, understanding, and healing. This can help children overcome their grief and find comfort in special memories.

#YouMatter



The Impact of Social Media on Mental Wellness

Research has shown that people who use social media are three times as likely to suffer from depression, experience low self-worth, and have a higher likelihood of experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Here are two major myths and facts about social media.

Myth: *Everyone's life on social media is a true reflection of their lives.*

Fact: People often share the highlights of their lives on social media, not the whole story. While you see one picture, it likely took the person over 25 takes to "get the picture right"—using the right filter, ensuring the perfect angle, getting everyone to smile, and so forth. Everyone has ups and downs, good and bad days, insecurities, and confidence, but these different experiences are not always shared online.

Myth: *Social media likes and followers mean I am liked, wanted, and loved.*

Fact: Your worth is not determined by your number of likes or followers. True self-worth comes from within and is based on your values, actions, and how you treat others. Does what truly matters to you is the number of double taps you get, or should it be your feelings about yourself, how fulfilling your life is, and the connections you have with those you love and care for the most?

Challenge these Thoughts

When you catch yourself thinking— "***Everyone on social media is happier and better than me.***" Let's walk you through your thoughts.

- **First, examine the evidence.** A picture never captures the true or long version of the story. It's a great picture; that is all you know. Tell yourself, "*Is it realistic to believe everyone is always happy and perfect?*" (Everyone has ups and downs, but they might not share them online.)
- **Consider alternative perspectives** — "*Maybe people are just sharing their highlights, and I shouldn't compare my life to their best moments.*"
- **Next, replace with a balanced thought**— "*Social media shows only a part of people's lives. I have good moments, too, even if I don't post them.*"
- **Now it's time to practice self-compassion**— "*It's normal to feel this way sometimes, but I must remember that social media isn't the whole story.*"
- **If needed, act**— "*I can limit my time on social media and focus on activities that make me feel good about myself.*"

Remember, you can take action to improve your mental wellness by limiting your time on social media and changing your thoughts about what you view. Your life has value! **If negative thoughts and emotions have you feeling down, reach out for support by dialing or texting 988!**

MAINTAINING A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE ON RURAL HIGH SCHOOLS CAMPUSES

A college-going culture on a high school campus refers to an environment and set of practices that actively promote and support pursuing higher education, vocational or technical school, or other professional training programs. This culture has several key elements: expectations and beliefs, academic rigor and support, college preparation, counseling and guidance, community and stakeholder engagement, integration into established school culture, and equity and access.



The Benefits of Nurturing a College-Going Culture in a Rural Community

- **Economic Opportunities:** Higher education often opens doors to better job prospects and earning potential.
- **Breaking the Cycle of Poverty:** Education is a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty.
- **Role Models and Inspiration:** When more individuals from rural communities attend college, they serve as role models for younger generations.
- **Improved Health and Well-being:** Higher education is linked to better health outcomes and greater awareness of health issues.
- **Addressing Rural Challenges:** Many rural areas face unique challenges, such as limited access to resources and services.

How to Maintain a College-Going Culture in Rural Communities

- **Consistent Messaging:** Regularly communicate the importance of higher education through school announcements, newsletters, and classroom discussions with accurate and up-to-date information.
- **College Counseling:** Maintain robust and accessible college counseling services.
- **Celebrate Achievements:** Continue celebrating college-related successes, such as acceptances, scholarships, and academic improvements.
- **Student Involvement:** Student-led college clubs or peer mentoring programs can keep the conversation going among their peers.
- **Community Partnerships:** Build and maintain partnerships with local colleges and universities.
- **Parent and Guardian Involvement:** Keep parents and guardians informed and engaged through workshops, informational sessions, and regular communication.
- **Feedback and Adaptation:** Regularly seek feedback from students, parents, and staff about the college-going culture and adapt strategies as needed.
- **Support Systems:** Ensure that support systems like tutoring, academic advising, and test preparation remain available and relevant.
- **Integration into Curriculum:** Incorporate college readiness into various subjects and activities.
- **College Visits, Fairs, and Events:** These resources help students visualize themselves in college and understand college life.
- **Extracurricular Activities:** Support and promote involvement in extracurricular activities, such as clubs, sports, and volunteer work, that can enhance college applications.
- **Start Early:** Prioritize post-secondary plans and goals with freshmen.



SCHOOL COUNSELOR RESIDENCY

The California Center on Teaching Careers at the Tulare County Office of Education has made history by launching the nation's first school counselor residency program. Cohort 1 of the School Counselor Residency (SCR) program includes 12 residents and 12 mentors dedicated to making a difference in students' lives. We're excited to highlight Jesse Isaguirre, one of the inaugural school counselor residents, and learn more about his journey and experiences in this groundbreaking program.

Meet Jesse Isaguirre

A resident of the School Counselor Residency. Born in Reedley, and raised in Parlier, Jesse is committed to supporting students. With a bachelor's from Cal Poly and continued studies at Fresno Pacific University, Jesse strives to impact the lives of his students positively.

Why School Counseling?

Jesse joined the school counseling profession to be the role model he wished he had in high school. Reflecting on his academic challenges, he aims to support students by building strong relationships and creating an inclusive, engaging environment—especially for students who feel disconnected from school.

Impact on Campus

Jesse feels fulfilled in his role and driven to help students succeed. He understands the responsibility of this role and works to contribute positively to the school community while building a future for his family.

Advice for Students and Parents

Jesse advises students to persevere, do their best, and communicate openly with those around them. For parents, he emphasizes the importance of listening to and trusting their kids, as this strengthens connections and supports academic success.

Jesse appreciates the warm welcome at Sierra Pacific and is eager to continue supporting students. His message is: "*Con Tiempo se hace todo—things take time. Focus on today, do your homework, and don't be afraid to express your emotions.*"



What is FAFSA?

Financial Student Aid, a free form that allows students to apply for federal aid for college or career school. FAFSA is the largest source of financial aid available for students. FAFSA helps determine how much a student and their family can contribute toward college costs.

Requirements

- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
- Have a valid Social Security number
- Have a high school diploma or GED certificate
- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a qualifying program

Important Dates:

- **October 2024:** Create student FSA ID; Create parent FSA ID
- **December 2024:** Application opens
- **March 2, 2025** is the last day to submit application

[Apply to FAFSA Here](#)



Volunteer Opportunity

When you volunteer at a Boys & Girls Club, you can make a difference in the lives of youth and give back to your community. Within the first few minutes of walking into a Club, you know you're in a special place. Filled with the sounds and energy of spirited children and friendly, caring professionals, the Club is a fun and hopeful environment. Whether you help with homework, coach a game, or teach an art project, you'll have the opportunity to build healthy relationships with young people eager for adult guidance, and have a positive impact on their lives.

Visit: <https://bgcsequoias.org/volunteer>



Upcoming Events

Whether you're looking to reconnect with friends, make new memories with family, or gain new life experiences, knowing what's happening in your community is a great way to plan.



[Events in Tulare County](#)



[TCOE | Calendar of Events](#)



Thank You

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Tulare County
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