

**WILLIAM ANNIN MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**Counseling Office**  
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Dear Parents/Guardians,

It's safe to say that living in a global pandemic for eleven months has taken its toll on all of us. Some of us feel like our batteries are empty. We continue to spend time indoors, without access to support systems like friends and a normal school/work routine. Our tolerance for stress has gone down, leaving us searching for new ways to reset and restore balance in our lives. In these times, reaching out for help may be necessary.

We are fortunate, in Bernards Township, to have many local resources.

[The Pioneer Family Success Center \(FSC\)](#) is a program of EmPoWER Somerset that is dedicated to connecting families to local resources and offering free programming that brings families closer together. On their [events page](#), you will find a variety of community offerings that do just that.

- [Here](#) you'll find their impact guide which offers resources for youth and families surrounding issues of substance use and mental health.
- Additionally, this [document](#) is a referral resource guide providing both local and national resources for a variety of needs.

The mission of the [Bernards Township Municipal Alliance](#) is to provide consultation, programs, training, and resources to members of the Bernards Township community with the goal of preventing and reducing the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. They provide a number of programs and services to our community as well as useful information for parents like their [Parent Survival Tools](#). On their website, you'll find a number of [resources](#) and community events.

Throughout the county, you'll find free and low-cost opportunities to take [Youth Mental Health First Aid](#) classes. Similar to medical first aid, Youth Mental Health First Aid is designed for the general population so that they can recognize when a youth may be facing a mental health challenge and provide assistance while connecting them to resources like the ones outlined above. Any adult who interacts with children in any way should consider this valuable training! It can certainly save a life. *Virtual classes are available through the [Pioneer Family Success Center](#) and the [Bernards Township Municipal Alliance](#).*

It's OK to not be OK. Knowing where to start when you face a challenge is half the battle. If you need help navigating community resources, please reach out to your student's counselor. We are here to help in any way that we can.

**If you have immediate concerns about your child's emotional or mental health and safety, please do not wait to take action. When school staff is not available, we recommend these resources:**

- your primary care physician/ pediatrician
- mental health practitioners/ therapists accessible through your health insurance provider
- [Somerset County PESS](#) (Psychiatric Emergency Screening Service/ Mobile Outreach) via Bridgeway
- [NJ PerformCare services for children](#)
- [Richard Hall Community Mental Health](#) Children's Outpatient Services, Bridgewater
- [Crisis Intervention Atlantic Health](#), Morristown Medical Center

All of us here at WAMS Counseling Department are here to support you and your children.

**The WAMS counseling department:**

**Andy West and Amy Stem (grade 6)**

**Cara Rychecky and Jamie Sutton (grade 7)**

**Lori Thompson and Marissa Berkowitz (grade 8)**

**Dr. Barbara Kurlansik (6,7,8)**