

October 1, 2007

To The Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of _____

For the first time this year at JGHS, I will be offering a group counseling experience called "Project Cope" to a small group of special education students. This group will be geared towards students who have demonstrated long-term emotional difficulties which have interfered with their academic performance and social adjustment at school. I will be co-leading the group with our School Social Worker, Mrs. Sherine DeJesus. We will meet twice per month on alternating Mondays during Periods 5 and 6 and will have approximately sixteen group meetings. If your child is scheduled to be in a class during one of these periods, we ask your permission in excusing him/her from class during this time, with the understanding that he/she will be responsible for missed work.

Some of the characteristics of students being recommended for this group may include some (but not necessarily all) of the following:

1. Frequent depressed moods or mood swings
2. Problems with anger management
3. Feelings of emptiness or of having no clear purpose in life
4. Fears of being abandoned or rejected in relationships
5. Escaping or avoiding certain situations/places which may be stressful
6. Frequent vague physical complaints leading to lateness or excessive absence
7. Being bothered by past emotionally upsetting memories or events
8. Self-injurious behavior or suicidal ideation
9. Forming intense attachment in relationships and then being devastated when these relationships come to an end
10. Impulsive decision-making with family and friends

The Project Cope group will have three goals:

1. Teaching effective self-management of negative mood states
2. Helping members to accept responsibility for their own lives
3. Development of four specific coping skills which have been shown to improve overall life adjustment. These skills will include:

1. Mindfulness Skills – techniques to focus us in the present moment and not on the past or future events in our lives.
2. Emotion Regulation Skills – skills to label and control emotional states before they control us
3. Distress Tolerance Skills – skills to tolerate a period of high stress while not engaging in behaviors to make the situation worse.
4. Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills - skills to improve relationships while at the same time maintaining self-respect.

If you have any questions about this group, please contact me in the Guidance Office at 266-5418. I will also need your written consent, so that I may make any necessary changes to the counseling portion of your child's IEP (see attached). We are looking forward to an exciting year, and hope to schedule an evening parent event after we have worked with the group for a period of time. Thank you for your support!!

Sincerely,

Anthony Pantaleno, Ph.D.
School Psychologist

PLEASE RETURN THE ATTACHED FORM TO DR. PANTALENO IN THE GUIDANCE OFFICE. THANK YOU.

“PROJECT COPE” PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM

I give my child permission to attend the above counseling group. I understand that the group will meet at Elwood JGHS on alternating Mondays during Periods 5 and 6.

I give Dr. Pantaleno permission to make any necessary changes in the counseling portion of my child’s IEP, and understand that I may withdraw my child from this group at any time, at which time the IEP will be changed to reflect its’ former service level.

I also understand that if my child is scheduled to be in class during the meeting time of the group, he/she will be excused from class on this day without penalty.

Name of Student: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

September, 2007