

NEW MILFORD YOUTH AGENCY

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER



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Director's Message

Jason O'Connor, LMSW

"October 10th is World Mental Health Day designated by the World Health Organization or WHO. Though designated as only a day, this event is more than that and symbolizes the recent change and acceptance towards mental health initiatives and appreciation. This coincides with the National Alliance on Mental Illness' (NAMI) mental illness awareness week which is the first week of October. The focus of these events and campaigns are to encourage individuals to come together to give and receive mental health support.

Don't worry if you are reading this and are thinking "oh darn, well guess I missed that week.." or "maybe next year I can participate..."

The great thing about mental health appreciation is that you can start any day or time!!! Always start small and be proud of yourself and what achievements that you accomplish.

Even if you do not meet your goal, all efforts count and should be appreciated. Use this month and this newsletter as a kick-start to take care of yourself and prioritize your own mental health. Do something that brings you joy and take time for yourself and appreciate who you are as there is only one of you, and that is pretty cool I think! (Yes, I am talking to you reading this right now!) And if you think you have squared away and are mentally fit, look to support others that may need a helping hand or going through some tough times. Even if someone isn't struggling on the outside, we never know a person's inner struggles or concerns and a friendly "Hey, how are you doing today?" has never hurt anyone. So reach out to others, take care of yourself, and let the changing season be a start and reminder to prioritize mental health."

If you need immediate mental health support for yourself or someone else, the following options are available: 211, 911, National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255), or text HELLO to 741741

TOUCHING SPIRIT BEAR BY BRIAN MIKAELSON

YOUTH INTERVENTION MANAGER-
STACEY KABASAKALIAN

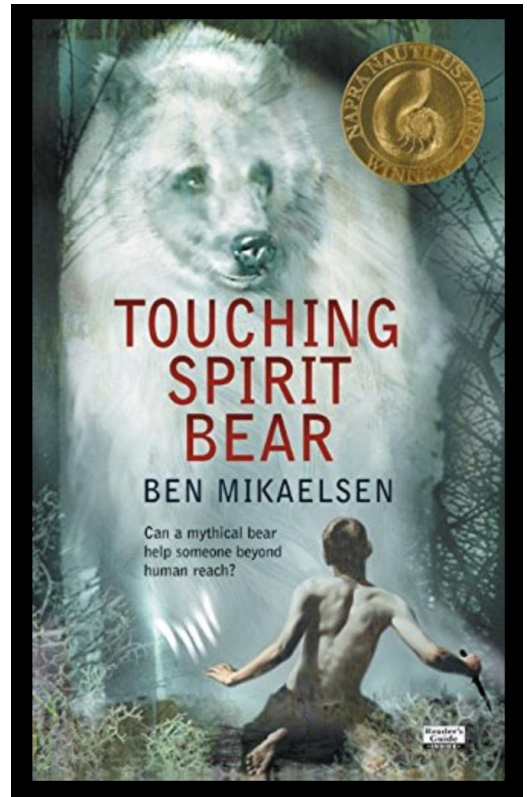
Touching Spirit Bear is a quick, easy read geared for children in middle school and I believe is often required reading and used with lesson plans in schools. Mrs. Gallagher, Principal at Northville Elementary School, recently lent it to me after our discussion about restorative justice practices (thank you, Gwen, I will get this back to you very soon)!

The main character, Cole, is in pain and is angry and the adults are not having any success in reaching him. He seriously hurts another child and is sent to an island, not as punishment but for healing and learning about himself.

On the island, he makes bad choices and burns all his survival supplies and almost dies. This was the most important point in the book to me. He did not value his own life, he could not control his anger enough to make a rational decision about his future, and he may have ruined his opportunity to avoid prison.

This book was written before the TikTok trend to vandalize school bathrooms, but I think of this as a perfect analogy. Why would students want to destroy their own schools? Didn't students just fight to have bathrooms open a few years ago after vaping had many of them shut down and/or monitored? How do we help people who not only harm others but continue to make decisions that mostly harm themselves? Touching Spirit Bear is a far-fetched example of Restorative Justice that schools and communities are now trying to use to help address these questions.

Check out Touching Spirit Bear and let me know what you think!



CHILDCARE UPDATE

Brian Hembrook- Childcare & Prevention Manager

So September was a great month for our child care program. It has been great to watch the kids and staff settle in and it is beginning to feel more and more like a normal school year. The kids have enjoyed spending the beautiful days outside playing with friends. We have some wonderful new staff that has hit the ground running and as always our returning staff has been instrumental in our program running as well as it does. We look forward to a wonderful fall season and are excited about all the fun we will have. We continue to have limited spots available at both Northville Elementary school and Schaghticoke middle school. For more info or to register visit www.myyouthagency.com or call Brian at 860-210-2030.

Enrichment Program

Vincent Vanwattam- Enrichment Program Supervisor

Culinary Classes are Back! - NES, Hill and Plain, SNIS, and SMS students get ready to cook and eat delicious food.

Learn To DJ with The Music Team- Learn to produce music, count beats, and mix songs Classes start 10/26

[Register for Workshops at myyouthagency.com](http://myyouthagency.com)

Learn to Cater with LHTC- Classes start 10/15

More Info: vvanwattam@newmilford.org or call 860-210-2030



UPCOMING EVENTS

November:

GRL PWR: Middle School Workshop every 1st Wednesday:

Next meeting 11/3 from 3:00-4:00 PM at JPCC

DJ After School Program: Every Tues. starting 10/26

from 4:00-5:00 PM at the Maxx Cost: \$120

Open to 6-12 Graders

Girls Who Code: Fridays starting Nov. 5th: 4:00 – 5:00 PM at JPCC

Open to 3rd - 5th Grade Students (15 weeks) Transportation Provided from SNIS

Wednesdays: 5:30-7:00 PM: LGBTQIA+ Allies (1st & 3rd Wed)

Open to all High School Age Students at the Maxx

Kindness is Key: Every Monday starting Nov. 15th, (Afterschool) 3:30-4:45 PM

Open to 3rd-5th Grade Students

Thursday, November 18, 2021: 5:00 PM: Murder Mystery at the Senior Center

[Register for Programs/Workshops at myyouthagency.com](http://myyouthagency.com)

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Teenage Depression

Sara Wells-LMSW

Everybody feels sad or blue now and then. But it may be depression if you're sad most of the time and it's giving you problems with your relationships, your grades or attendance at school, alcohol, drugs or sex, or controlling your behaviour in any other way. Depression can affect your thoughts, feelings, behaviour and overall health.

How prevalent is teen depression?

Approximately 4% of adolescents experience serious depression

Who is at risk of developing depression during their teen years?

Sometimes people get seriously depressed after a divorce in the family, major financial problems, someone you love dying or breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend. Other times — like with other medical conditions — depression just happens. It's important to get treatment for depression before it leads to other troubles.

What are the risk factors/triggers for teen depression?

There is no single cause of depression. Stressful and discouraging situations naturally overwhelm and have the potential to become serious. Experiences of failure commonly result in temporary feelings of worthlessness and self-blame, while personal loss causes feelings of sadness, disappointment and emptiness.

The onset of depression may be attributed to some of these factors:

- Genetic predisposition – a family member has depression

- Death or illness of friend/family member

- Financial difficulties

- Difficulties with a job or personal relationship

- Poor self-esteem

- Seasonal or hormonal changes

- Addictions

What are the symptoms of teen depression?

- You feel sad or cry a lot and it doesn't go away

- You don't feel like doing a lot of the things you used to like — music, sports, being with friends, going out — you want to be left alone most of the time

- You feel like you're no good; you've lost confidence

- Life seems meaningless or like nothing good is ever going to happen again. You have a negative attitude a lot of the time, or it seems like you have no feelings

- It's hard to make up your mind. You forget lots of things and it is hard to concentrate

- You get irritated often. Little things make you lose your temper and you overreact

- Your sleep pattern changes: you sleep a lot more or you have trouble falling asleep. Or you wake up really early and can't go back to sleep

- You've lost your appetite or you eat a lot more

- You feel restless and tired most of the time

You think about death and dying or have thoughts about suicide

Talk to a professional if you've had five or more of these symptoms for more than two weeks. If any of the symptoms cause such a big change that you can't keep to your usual routines, see your doctor.

Talk to someone. If you are concerned about depression, talk to someone about it. There are people who can help get you treatment:

- A professional at a mental health centre

- A trusted family member

- Your family doctor

- Your clergy

- A school counsellor or nurse

- A social worker

- A responsible adult

What are the treatment options for teen depression?

Counselling means talking with a trained professional about thoughts, feelings, actions and relationships. You work together to find where problems exist and to learn how to make changes in the relationships, thoughts and behaviours that contribute to depression.

Student of the Month

Brooklynn Gallo



Brooklynn is such a great part of our group at Hill and Plain! She is always willing to help a friend without hesitation. Brooklynn is kind, helpful, caring, funny, and always follows directions. She is a wonderful role model for both the new and younger children in our program. Brooklynn leads by example and is most often one of the first ones ready to go to the gym or playground. She is by far one of our fastest runners as well as the Mancala game champion! Her smile definitely brightens each day at Hill and Plain site.

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