

Dear Parents, Guardians & Caregivers,

As we navigate through the COVID 19 pandemic, please be assured that Frances Kelsey Counsellors are preparing ways to help your children. We know that youth are likely feeling overwhelmed and even underwhelmed by the sudden change in their lives. In any crisis, there are typical reactions to non-typical and stressful events. It is normal for some youth to experience any of the following symptoms: fear, worry, agitation, a change in sleeping patterns, eating problems, unexplained headaches or body pain, difficulty concentrating, excessive crying and sadness, regression to behaviors thought to be "outgrown," excessive video gaming and even an avoidance of previously enjoyed activities.

Teenagers are developmentally primed to be with their friends and to be a part of their group. The lack of in person connection whether it is "hanging out" with friends or connecting during family holidays, or participating in more formal gatherings like classes, sports, music lessons, student jobs or other organized activities are missing in their lives. We suspect that young people may now have a new awareness about the limitations of social media and the value of seeing "their people" in person. This sudden lack of structure can further impact youth and may contribute to changes in mood. Some of our children may be full of worry and look at this event beyond their personal world. They may be reflecting on the larger context of what this pandemic means for our community, our country and globally now and in the future.

As a family, you have likely read (or viewed) many resources, emails and social media posts during the COVID -19 crisis. This can be an overwhelming, information overload and may in itself cause anxiety for youth, parents and caregivers. To simplify things, the District and Secondary Counsellors have assembled a list of *local* and *recommended* resources on the District website: <https://sd79.bc.ca/covid-19-updates/community-and-district-support-resources-2/>; and on the Kelsey website: <https://fkss.sd79.bc.ca/#>.

We are trying to ensure that our students and our families in our school community have the support they need, in whatever possible way, when direct, in person contact with them is not possible. Please feel free to contact Mary Kirchner [mkirchne@sd79.bc.ca](mailto:mkirchne@sd79.bc.ca) and / or Nicci Wright [nwright@sd79.bc.ca](mailto:nwright@sd79.bc.ca). Once we receive an initial email from a student, parent, guardian or caregiver, we will set up the best way to connect with you either by phone, zoom or other mode of communication.

Finally, Counsellors are also collaborating with School Administrators, Advisors, Teachers, Learning & Resource Educators and Education Assistants to support the social and emotional needs of your child. Please know that we all care about your welfare, no question or "check- in" is too small!

Wishing you well over the holiday weekend!

Kind Regards,

Mary Kirchner and Nicci Wright  
Frances Kelsey School Counsellors

