

Dear Families/Caregivers,

In light of the recent events, we have been talking about our emotions and how our emotions are natural responses to people, places, things, and events. Following a traumatic event, many teens have difficulty understanding what they are feeling. We have been talking about how to identify our emotions, as well as how to accept and express our emotions in healthy ways.

We learned to identify, accept, and express our emotions by:

- Noticing our physical responses to our emotions.
- Developing an emotional vocabulary.
- Using breathing or mindfulness exercises to help us calm down.
- Writing in a journal or talking with someone.
- Choosing the healthy ways to express our emotions.

Here are some suggestions for ways to help your teen identify their feelings and process the current events:

- Reassure your teen that they are safe. While teens are comforted by age-appropriate facts, it's important to limit their exposure to social media and other news outlets.
- As much as possible, stick to your typical routines; or if your routines have been disrupted, establish new routines as soon as possible.
- Talk with your teen or encourage them to talk with others about how they are feeling.
- Help your teen identify their emotions by noticing and pointing out their words or body language. For example, if your teen is nervously tapping, say something like, *I see you're tapping, how are you feeling?* Talking openly with your teen about their emotions will help them better identify and accept their emotions.
- Look for signs of stress in your teen. Some signs may include anxiety, aggression, moodiness, physical discomfort, lethargy, or withdrawal. Talk to me, our school administrator, or a healthcare profession about any concerns you have about your teen.

Being able to recognize and accept one's emotions is an important first step to recovering from a traumatic event. It's important to remember that everyone responds to and recovers from trauma in a different way. It's also important to seek the support of others during and following a traumatic event.