

Is your student feeling stressed, anxious or unusually angry or sad?

By Mindy Cochran, MSSW

Life Skills Counselor

Bishop Dwenger High School

“I don’t want to go to school!” “I can’t do it!” “I can’t sleep!” “Nobody else deals with this!” “Leave me alone! You don’t understand! You are not me!” “This is too much!”

These are common statements we hear at school. Sometimes students who have anxiety or more than usual stress, sadness or anger think other students do not go through similar situations. However, there are other students who go through similar emotions related to stress, anxiety, sadness and anger.

It is important as parents, students, staff, and volunteers for us to take 5 steps backwards, and take a deep breathe with our students and help them. When a student is trying to cope with a ball of emotions, and it has impacted their sleep and appetite, the next day is even more difficult for them.

As parents, teachers, staff, administration and volunteers, don’t we want our Saints to be able to have the best life possible? It reminds me of the Jason Mraz song, Have it all. We want our children to be the best to their ability. We would like to see our children are happy, healthy, successful, and live life as God would want us to.

There are several options we can do as a Dwenger Family to help support our Saints. As we approach the Lent season, I encourage all of our Dwenger Families to take on a Lent challenge. I believe as we make changes as individual families, it can help support our Saints who are going through various individual situations. As we make adjustment and changes as a family, it can help your Saint individually too.

Listed below are ideas you and your family may want to use as a family challenge for Lent.

Eat at least 1 healthy family meal together each week. Take time to fix family meals together. Everyone can help with dinner. Choose a favorite meal for each family member and rotate those meals each week.

Everyone goes to bed a little earlier. It is healthy for our bodies and minds to get rest. We need to allow our minds and physical body rest.

Parents spend more one on one time with each child. It is helpful to sit down in a quiet place and just catch up with each other share about your day. Everyone deserves some personal attention and extra TLC.

Parents – be human! It’s okay to talk with your student about what kind of day you had and not ask them about homework. Sometimes, our students feel like our parents “harp” about homework. So, ask or talk to them about something else besides homework.

Families stop by an Adoration Chapel and spend 10-20 minutes in adoration as a family. What a way to start some new family traditions, and spend time with our Dear Lord together as a family!

Everyone decreases their use of technology. Put away the smart phones at the table. Decrease texting to family and friends. If you want to talk with someone, pick up the phone and hear their voice. I am

sure we have moments, and wish we could just hear a voice of a loved one who has passed away. So, decrease the texting and take advantage of the time we have together and talk.

Set up a technology docking station. Everyone in the house plugs in their electronic devices in one location. If we struggle with going to sleep, put away the electronic devices at least 30 minutes before going to bed.

Be silly together! When was the last time, you turned up the music in your home and danced in the kitchen with your family? What a way to have fun, laugh, and healthy!

Take time and have a Family Night! Family night can be a night of no smart phones. Your family could have a special meal or snack together and play some board games or cards. No PlayStation or electronic games. After the family plays the board game or cards, slow the family night down with a family movie together. Pick a funny family movie. Laughter decreases stress and releases endorphins. Laughter sure warms the heart.

As a family, create a new family tradition after going to Mass together. Maybe stop by a park and everyone puts on a coat and go for a family walk together. Make it a family adventure and have fun with it. Getting outside and doing a physical activity is very healthy for our mind and body. Especially if the sun is out!

Link to Jason Mraz, Have It All

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFkTu8Y1KLs>