

## Behavioral Health Ministry Team News August 2022

Back to School is right around the corner. It can be really exciting to see friends again, new classes, fun activities, maybe even some new clothes. Back to school can also cause kids and their parents some real anxiety. School culture can encourage growth, curiosity, trying out and discovering who a person will become. The culture can also suppress, bully, and diminish a person so much they may become suicidal. What may look like “a simple disagreement or break-up” of a relationship may be a devastating blow. Not being in the “in” crowd or any crowd for that matter can make the school experience a real struggle. For kids or anyone who become despondent or in crisis, there is a new national suicide/crisis hotline. 988 is the crisis hotline which is run by professionals who know how to respond to suicidal crises 24/7. No longer do folks need to call 911. The 988 number can and will handle mental health emergency calls!

So, what to do? As parents, family, and good friends establishing on-going communication with your child/student. Eating meals together at a media-free table invites good conversation. Discovering both different and similar interests and hobbies; attending church together as a family also establishes another base of support which children desperately need. Teaching and enforcing good boundaries, even when pushback is experienced as parents set rules which a child can depend on brings about a sense of relief for kids. Parents need not be their child’s friend; kids need a parent who provides structure, love, expectations, support, opportunities to learn from failure, encouragement, and growing in self-reliance of their ability to weather life’s disappointments and setbacks.

Take interest and share interests together with the kids in your lives. Ask their opinions, value their input. Experience nature together, talk about your ideas of God and the universe. Discover and take real delight in each other’s company. Back to school can truly be a gateway of discovery in and for one another. To learn more about how you can support your children and yourself through this transition time, check out Mindspring Mental Health Alliance’s free webinars [HERE](#).