



# Burnt Hills - Ballston Lake High School Counseling & Wellness Centers

[www.bhbl.org](http://www.bhbl.org)

518.399.9141

## COUNSELING CENTER

School Counselors help students with academic, career, and personal development.

### Counselors

Mrs. Austin  
Mrs. Hogan  
Mrs. Raucci  
Mr. Weinlein

### Office Staff

Mrs. Pantalone  
Mrs. Smith



## WELLNESS CENTER

School social workers and school psychologists provide emotional and behavioral support, educational testing, crisis and short-term counseling.

### Social Workers

Mrs. Lamalfa  
Mrs. Perkins  
Mrs. Tessitore

### Psychologist

Mrs. Blais

## WINTER WELLNESS NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2024

### PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

Problem solving skills are essential and will be needed throughout life. We all have to solve problems every day; in school and in social situations. By developing problem solving skills you will be able to:

- sort out conflict
- be independent
- achieve challenging goals
- make decisions on your own



The ability to problem solve can stop small issues from escalating into big ones, and can therefore have an important impact on your mental health and wellbeing.

- **Step 1: Identify the problem.** The first step is working out exactly what the problem is. This can help everyone understand the problem. Get everyone who's affected by the problem together and then put the problem into words that make it solvable.
- **Step 2: Identify Options.** Make a list of all the possible ways you could solve the problem. Try to avoid judging or debating these yet. Aim for five possible solutions. Write them down.
- **Step 3: Evaluate Each Option and then Pick One.** Look at the pros and cons of all the suggested solutions. This way, everyone will feel their suggestions have been considered. Cross off solutions that you agree aren't acceptable and cross off ones that have more cons than pros. Rate the remaining to sort out the most promising solution. The chosen solution should be one you can put into practice and that could likely solve the problem.
- **Step 4: Put the Solution into Action.** Once you've agreed on a solution, plan exactly how it will work. Write it down and include the following:
  - Who will do what?
  - When will they do it?
  - What's needed to put the solution into action?
- **Step 5: Evaluate the Outcome.** How did it go? Reflecting on decision-making matters as it will help with future problem solving. Would you make the same decision again or try something different?
- **Step 6: Practice.** Practice these steps every day, not just in high-stakes situations. Practice identifying the problem, identifying options, evaluating options, choosing, and reflecting. Soon, the process will become second nature and you will become an expert problem-solver!



# Stress Management

Sometimes, life can be stressful. And it's not just the big things that can cause stress. Life's everyday hassles, demands, and pressures can cause stress, too.

At times, a small surge of stress can be a positive thing. It can help you do well under pressure, be on time, or meet a deadline. It can alert you to a problem you need to handle. It can motivate you toward your goals. It can push you to study, plan, and prepare.

But too much stress — or stress you can't manage — keeps you from doing and feeling your best. It can wear you down, drain your energy, and make it harder to get things done. Too much stress can lead you to feel cranky, annoyed, or scattered.

You can't avoid stress. But you can make it a goal to keep everyday stress at low levels. When you stress less over everyday stuff, you're better able to handle bigger challenges you might face. If you want to get better at managing everyday stress, here are a few things that can help you:

## PLAN YOUR DAY

Use a calendar or planner app to keep track of your daily schedule. Block in times to finish homework, study for tests and work on assignments. Block in times to do things you enjoy. Having a plan and a daily routine lowers stress.

## DEAL WITH PROBLEMS

Don't ignore everyday problems — but don't stress out about them either. Instead, figure out how to handle them. If you're not sure what to do, ask for help and advice from others.

## EXERCISE EVERY DAY

Stress melts away when you're working out, playing a sport, taking a walk, or dancing to your favorite music. Exercise does more than keep you fit. It's a way to manage stress, lower anxiety and depression, and make your mood more positive.

## STICK TO YOUR PLAN

Of course, planning is no good if you don't do what you plan. Make it a routine to look at your planner every day. Check off what you've done. Get ready for what's coming up. Make a routine time to study. Keep on top of assignments. This lowers daily schoolwork stress.

## ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

Schoolwork, grades, and tests are a big source of stress for many teens. If you need help preparing for tests, planning projects, or getting things done, ask a teacher, parent, tutor, counselor or mentor to help you. If you procrastinate, pair up with a classmate to help stay on task.

## EAT GOOD FOOD

What you eat affects your mood, energy, and stress level. Choose foods that are good for you. You don't have to avoid all treats. But if sweets are your main source of fuel, you're likely to crash or feel cranky and stressed!

## BALANCE WORK & PLAY

Make time to work on tasks like schoolwork, chores, or practice. But be sure to make time for things you enjoy too like spending time with friends, listening to music, or watching a movie. Time to relax and recharge lowers your stress.

## Use the Positive Energy of Stress!

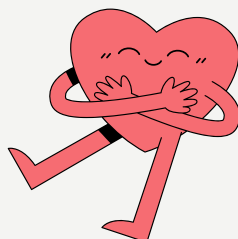
Don't put things off until the last minute. That's too stressful and it's hard to do your best if you're in a rush. Instead, let stress motivate you to get moving on a task.

## GET ENOUGH SLEEP

After a long day you might feel the need to stay up late. Maybe you've still got homework to finish or you want to talk to friends or watch a show. But going to bed late doesn't leave enough time for sleep when you need to get up early for school. Without enough sleep, you're more likely to feel stressed. Stick to a set bedtime and morning routine. Turn off screens well before bed and wind down with quiet activities.



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