

# Culture COUNTS

December 2020

## Self-care during the holiday season

By Dan Hesler

This year more than ever, it is important to keep in mind that the holiday season can be an extremely stressful time for many people. Many of us thrive with the structure and predictable environment that is created within the school/work setting, so being home for an extended period of time can be difficult. During this holiday season, we might all need a little extra support from our family, friends, and colleagues. During the next few weeks, take the time to take care of yourself!

Here are some tips to manage stress during the holiday season:

### Tips for staff:

- Keep to your routine as much as possible in the next few weeks
- Provide opportunities for self-regulation
- Practice mindfulness
- Exercise
- Eat healthy

For your students, instead of asking, “How was your weekend?” or “How was your holiday?,” ask trauma-informed questions like the ones below:

### Tips for interacting with students:

Here are some example questions:

- What is one kind thing someone said to you?
- What is one kind thing you did for someone?
- What is one thing you are grateful for?
- What is something you are good at?

When working with students, it also important to:

- Give time and space
- Use active listening

“  
*Sometimes, it only takes a single teacher to turn a child's life around. Some children will come to school today because of that teacher. Be that teacher, every day.*”

– Author Unknown

### Teachers Coaching Students - A Culture of Support



Turn to the second page to learn about how our facilitators at Seven Valleys have been supporting our students!

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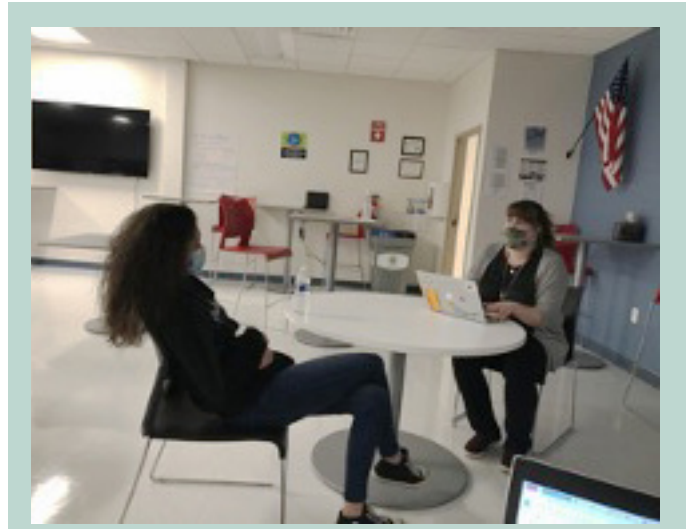
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# Supporting a Culture of Engagement: Coaching Students

By Randi Downs

Over the years, I've asked people to reflect on the teachers they remember most. When I ask them why certain teachers come to mind, they say things like, "She cared about what happened to me," "He had high expectations and encouraged me to deeply reflect on my work so that I could strive to do my best," or "I always felt that my teacher was with me on the journey, supporting me all the way." I've even had teachers, when asked, describe a memorable coach from a childhood sport, because a coach does that, too — cares about what happens to you, holds high expectations, and supports you all the way through to the finish line. [I found a helpful article that expands on that comparison](#), offering tips on how to coach and mentor students so that they stay engaged and find relevance in the instructional activities and curriculum.

At Seven Valleys New Tech Academy, facilitators are making time to coach their learners as well. Over the course of this year, each facilitator will closely mentor a small group of students as they navigate learning. The facilitators and school leadership understand the role authentic relationships play in increasing student engagement and hope this extra time spent with kids — connecting around learning goals, challenges and concerns — will enable all students to recognize that they are valued members of the community. When students feel an authentic connection to their facilitators and community, the culture thrives.



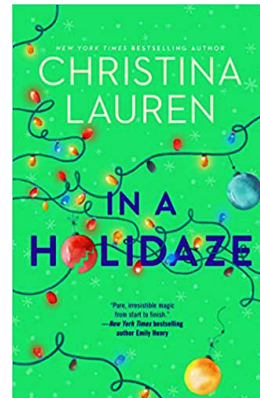
*Pictured: Facilitators Elisa Rodriguez and Alisa Main engage in coaching conversations with students.*

## Managing Wellness with EAP



On Thursday, Nov. 12, EAP Supervisor Michelle Stolicker (pictured right) hosted an EAP Learn at Lunch called "Distressed" to "De-Stressed" at OCM BOCES Main Campus. About 10 attendees practiced exercises for managing stress (pictured above).

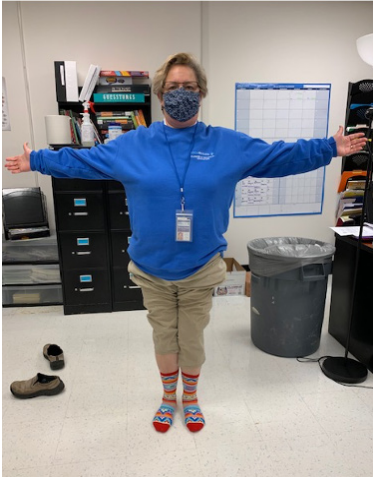
## OCM BOCES Book Club Update



New members are always welcome to join the OCM BOCES Book Club! The next book club meeting, which will be held after the holidays, will discuss "In a Holidaze" by Christina Lauren. To sign up or learn more, please email Terri Hewitt at [thewitt@ocmboces.org](mailto:thewitt@ocmboces.org).

# Wellness Counts

## Seven Valleys and Thompson Road Wellness Activities



Thank you to our OCM BOCES Wellness Committees for all of their work this year coordinating wellness activities!

In one example, students and staff in our CTE programs at the Thompson Road Campus wore BOCES blue for Spirit Week. The committee also coordinated a nature walk for staff at Seven Valleys.

More than ever, we are reminded of the support we provide each other at OCM BOCES and the importance of wellness to help us get through these challenging times.



### Recipe of the Month: Lemon Blueberry Buttermilk Sheet Pan Pancakes

- 1 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup white whole wheat flour
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
- 2 cups low-fat, 1% buttermilk
- 2 large eggs
- 1 medium lemon, juice and grated zest from
- 2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 cups blueberries
- 1/4 cup water
- OPTIONAL TOPPINGS
- Confectioners' sugar, pure maple syrup, honey, or light whipped cream

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Spray a rimmed 13 × 18-inch sheet pan with cooking spray (this will keep the parchment in place).
2. Cut a piece of parchment paper to cover the bottom completely. Place on the sheet pan and spray more oil on the parchment and around the sides of the sheet pan.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flours, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In another medium bowl, whisk together the butter, buttermilk, eggs, lemon juice and zest, vanilla, and 1/4 cup water until thoroughly combined.
4. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and whisk until just combined.
5. Do not overmix (or worry if there are some lumps). Gently fold in the blueberries with a spatula.
6. Pour the batter into the prepared sheet pan. Spread evenly with a spatula, then tap the sheet pan on the counter a few times to settle the batter.
7. Bake, rotating the pan halfway through, until golden and set, about 15 minutes.
8. Let cool for 5 minutes in the pan.
9. Place a large cutting board over the top of the pan and flip the pancake onto the cutting board.
10. Cut into 16 squares. Add toppings as desired and serve. Yields 8 servings.



Source: [www.skinnytaste.com/lemon-blueberry-sheet-pan-pancakes/](http://www.skinnytaste.com/lemon-blueberry-sheet-pan-pancakes/)

# Wellness Counts

## Physical Activity Tips Exercise and Stress: Get Moving to Manage Stress

***Walking is a great way to manage stress, especially during the holiday season. Just be sure to wear proper footwear and winter gear.***

**Why it works to reduce stress:** Walking is easy to do and requires no classes or special equipment.

Walking frequently can reduce the incidence of many of the stress-related conditions, including cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and cholesterol, and Type 2 diabetes.

People with regular walking regimens also report reduced stress levels and a self-confidence that comes from taking an active role in their well-being.

“Walking releases tension from the major muscle groups, deepens the breathing and quiets the nervous system,” says Dr. Jeff Migdow, an integrative physician in Lenox, Mass. “It also gets us out into nature, which is relaxing.”

**How to do it:** If you’re just getting started on walking for exercise, aim for two 10-minute walks a week.

After two or three weeks, gradually increase the frequency and duration of your walks.

Five or six 30-minute walks a week are usually



recommended to maintain health and stress management.

To lose weight, you’ll have to make those walks longer when you have time (say, 90 minutes on Sundays) and/or more intense (take a hilly route or ramp up speed). Your breath should be heavy but not labored.

*By Kate Hanley, Everyday Health*

### Mindful Activities with James Butler

Take a break for a mindful minute! Check out this Mindful Moment - Just Breathe activity from James Butler: <https://youtu.be/q27cdWBmvac>

### Have a suggestion for Wellness Counts?

We want to hear from you! Please submit any wellness suggestions for the newsletter to [wellness@ocmboces.org](mailto:wellness@ocmboces.org).