GUIDANCE BULLETIN

Psychological Counseling and Guidance

November 2022

INDIFFERENCE

Dear Parents,

in the 2022-23 Academic Year, we will continue to publish the Psychological Counseling and Guidance Bulletins, which we have shared with you regularly for the past two years and on which received positive feedback from you. We hope that the expert opinions and suggestions we share regarding the socio-emotional development processes in our newsletters will be guiding. We believe that we will support the development processes of our children even more strongly with the strong cooperation we have established with our esteemed parents.

At this point we have reached during the academic year, in which our students have left behind some of the exam and evaluation processes, we mainly discuss the anxiety and fear feelings of our students due to various reasons in this issue. Our main article in our newsletter in about ***"indifference"***, which is seen as a way of coping with danger, arising in children and young people together with the unknown source of anxiety and fear.

On this occasion, I would like to invite you to our Panel on "Child Rights and Limits in the Context of Family and School" that will take place on Saturday, November 26, 2022 at 10.30 am in our Atatürk Hall. At the panel, we will host 3 expert speakers from different disciplines who are experienced in children's rights and borders: Expert Psychological Counselor Miryam Anjel, Lawyer Seda Akço and Sexuality Educator and Counselor Efsun Sertoğlu. I hope to meet with you face-to-face in the panel and wish you a successful and healthy term.

Kind regards,

Sibel Yalkın
Head of Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department
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Preschool

“The problem isn't the transitions themselves, it's how well you respond to their challenges!”

Jim George

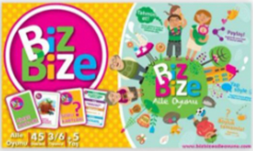
"Meeting innovations.."

Transitioning to a new school year has different meanings for every child. It is not always easy for children to leave the routine and the environment they are used to, meet new concepts and adapt to these new situations. It is of great importance for children to step into the school environment, which is the first step of social life, especially from a safe home environment. At this point, it is very normal for them to frequently need adult support in many subjects such as supporting their independence skills, acting together with their peers, following the class schedule. Even when they are struggling, their greatest desire is to be understood and to feel included. In this direction, the content of the topics we covered in the Guidance lessons was "Our Emotions and Individual Differences". We talked about the normal emotional transitions experienced during the day and that we can all feel different emotions. We chatted about how asking for help speeds up the process and the importance of sharing our feelings in a socially acceptable way.

During the preschool period, students often need to repeat the skills they have learned. Therefore, by accompanying them, you can give them the opportunity to gain new experiences.

You can benefit from the healing power of games and books in order to contribute to the socio-emotional development of your children and to make it easier for them to express their situations verbally.

Game Suggestions:



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Primary School

“Critical Perspective”

Our students started the 2022-2023 academic year with a desire to learn and a sense of curiosity. We care that our students have the opportunity to evaluate different perspectives in peer relations and what they have learned by questioning and researching. We talked to our students, who gain new knowledge and achievements every day in their social environment and academic studies, on the methods of questioning with a critical point of view and accessing the right information sources in our in-class large group studies and individual interviews with our students.

In order for our students to have a critical perspective and to initiate a questioning and evaluation process before immediately accepting the accuracy of any information they hear or see about a subject, we evaluated different perspectives through concrete examples and applied the steps of critical thinking.

Ask your child: “Is all the information we hear or acquire true?” You can brainstorm by asking questions.

You can tell your child that every information they see on the internet or hear in social environments is not true.

You can give your child the opportunity to interpret the situations and problems in daily life from their own perspective.

You can talk about different ideas and perspectives about a movie you watched, a book you read, or a place you went to.

When your child shares information, tells an event, or makes a claim, you can ask for evidence. You can encourage thinking about questioning sources of access to information when asking for their evidence.

You can brainstorm what methods and reliable sources your child might need to reach accurate and reliable information.

We hope that it will be a year in which we support our students to be individuals who are questioning, open to discussion and seeking alternative solutions to problems, with your valuable contributions.

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Middle School

“Self-Discipline and Mentoring Studies”

In the 2022-2023 Academic Year, we welcomed our middle school students with the theme of “self-discipline”. Across the school, “self-discipline” became the most spoken word during the first quarter. Our class teachers emphasized self-discipline in different areas by integrating them into the curriculum in the lessons.

We started “mentoring” activities in order to reinforce self-discipline through peer learning and to support it with a year-long project.

30 of our 8th grade students who volunteered went through a short training and learned how to support their 5th and 6th grade siblings. We matched our volunteer students with the students who we thought would benefit from this project in the 5th and 6th grades, who were also volunteers, and enabled them to start their studies. We aimed to enable them to meet at appropriate times throughout the year and to provide peer learning on academic-social issues.

As the Middle School Psychological Counseling and Guidance department, we both supported these studies and discussed this issue in our first "Parent Meeting" so that the "self-discipline" process could be handled in parallel at home.

We especially emphasized the following points with our parents:

- Consistency is very important in 3 areas; rules, routines, reactions
- Dividing the whole into parts, enabling them to develop a strategy is much more valuable than a solution we will find.
- It is necessary to make sure that the rules are appropriate for your child's age, clear and understandable so that there is no disappointment.
- Finally, there is no ideal parenting. The family is a dynamic system. Because everyone is different, every relationship is different too.

75 parents attended our parent meeting across the whole Middle School and shared that their awareness of self-discipline had increased. With this way; we hope to have conversations and exchanges that complement each other by speaking the same language as the school. We expect more parents to participate in our next study in order to emphasize the same issues at the same time.

We wish all our students and parents a productive academic year...

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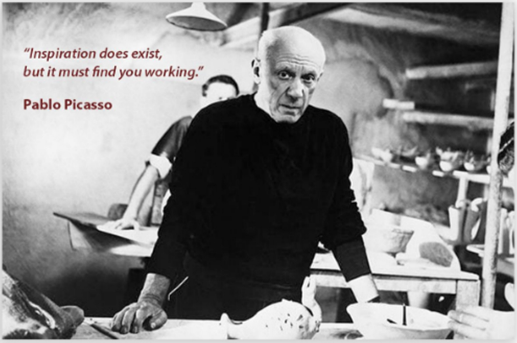
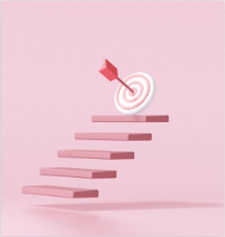
High School

“Goal Setting and Motivation”



Schools have opened and we are nearing the end of the first quarter; exam period knocked on the door. As the High School Counseling Department, we welcome our prep and 9th grade students who have just started their high school life with a fast-paced, intense period. Our 10th grade students who are confused and find it difficult to draw their boundaries as their future agenda becomes clear, and of course, our 11th grade students who may have difficulty balancing their anxiety levels trying to complete their university application and admission processes. We continued to support and counsel our 11th and 12th grade students.

In line with all these needs and observations, from the first week of the academic year until today, we have carried out a wide variety of activities to raise awareness of our students, especially on the topics of goal setting, motivation and time management. During the orientation process, volunteering students visited classes one grade below them and shared their experiences as their peers. The student listened to the necessity of setting the right goals and being motivated on the road to success from their peers. In the counseling and guidance classes we held in September and October, we discussed the benefits of goal setting with our students and how to make a successful goal setting. Also we touched upon the sources of motivation and relationship between motivation, feelings, thoughts, values and judgments. We tried to support these lessons with individual counseling sessions and tried to contribute to our students' academic progress.



With our holistic perspective that emphasizes the significance of having a common language for all school stakeholders, we have also addressed these topics in our parent and teacher studies. By discussing the concept of motivation in our parent sharing groups, we thought together about the reasons for low motivation in young people, whether sustainable motivation is possible, and what parents do to increase their children's motivation. We focused on these skills which are closely related to learning processes in the meetings we held with our teachers.

As parents, you can make these issues an agenda at home and support your child to share thoughts and feelings in a safe environment. Don't evaluate only the outcome but praise their effort and performance regardless of the grades. Every conversation should not end up about academic responsibilities. We believe in sincere communication about their dreams, desires, goals to achieve in life, and what they want to spend their lives doing. These conversations can be encouraging and help them find their inner resources and motivation.

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I Don't Care: Indifference in Today's Children and Teens

In the rapid flow of today's life, there are many things that people need to think about, pay attention to and do. The number of these "important" issues is substantial in the lives of children and young people. What about when there are so many things to pay attention to and do, how do children and young people behave in the face of these?

Many studies show that features such as callousness, indifference, insensitivity, inability to be happy, maintaining a state of continuous pleasure or delaying tasks that will delay gratification are common among children and young people. It can be said that there is a list that can be extended, such as not caring about the person, responsibilities, authority and rules, situations in the environment or society, risks, and insensitivity to reminders about them.

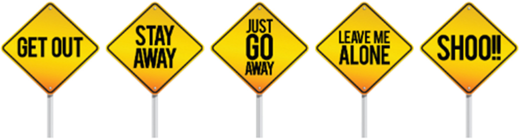
Why don't children and teenagers care?

Mental health experts emphasize the drastic mood swings of adolescence. In these studies, it is stated that they can behave in the opposite direction of the emotions they feel. Considered in this context, although indifference may seem like ignoring events, it may be due to a psychological conflict. Believing that everything is okay and denying the problem can be a coping method despite the anxiety, inadequacy, loss, sadness or mourning. Having such a belief reduces internal conflict and rationalizes the individual not to do anything in the face of the situation. Thus, inaction becomes acceptable to him/her.

Considering the indifference of children/young people to their responsibilities, to the work or behavior they are expected to do, it should not be overlooked that they may feel inadequate here as well. Children may have difficulty assessing whether their knowledge, skills, or experience are sufficient to do what is expected of them. In cases where they realize that they are inadequate, they may have difficulty in solving the problem due to their shyness in asking for help, perceiving asking for help as weakness, not knowing exactly from whom to ask for help, or believing that there will be no one to help even if they ask for help. Therefore, opening support channels consistently in the face of these seemingly indifferent attitudes of children, making them feel that we will never give up on our belief that they can develop in a positive way, and nurturing children's beliefs in themselves can encourage children to take these steps expected of them.

Indifference as a Defense Mechanisms

The concept of “defensive indifference” suggests that people use reckless attitudes to protect their relationships and/or themselves from conflict. With this approach, people aim to consciously prevent the reaction from the outside. For example, your child may act as if he doesn't care at all when faced with a loss, criticism or a sanction for a negative behavior.



This may be a method he/she uses because he/she has difficulty in experiencing or expressing feelings such as disappointment, guilt, regret, inadequacy or sadness. In doing so, they may fall under the illusion that they appear to be "strong, unaffected" to both family and friends. And as the number of experiences that reinforce this perception increases, the behavior may become more permanent. For this reason, it may be useful to consider these attitudes as "don't care" directly, and to open a door for them to express their feelings before reacting to this situation and to think about solutions together to compensate for their behavior that creates these feelings.

So how is it possible to avoid this culture of indifference?

Some mental health professionals argue that this attitude can change when insight into behaviors is gained and the consequences of behaviors are experienced for others and themselves. It is underlined that taking individual responsibility in order to correct the negative situation caused by the attitude of indifference is also an important point in the solution. If we think in terms of educational life, some aspects of school and learning process can be as follows; homework with poor content or not done at all, criticisms about school, negative discourses about school, avoiding homework and studying, not wanting to go to school, etc.

Because of their tendency to not want to do anything on their own, they cannot tolerate the frustration they experience at the slightest warning or criticism they receive. They may exhibit angry and destructive behaviors. Such behavior may be a sign of other difficulties, but if teachers and parents are confident that the root of the problem is indifference, they can develop some effective strategies that can help the child come out of his apathetic state.

Motivation

One of the most important reasons for apathy is lack of motivation. The most important intervention should be to encourage them to rediscover their individual motivations. The first step in this context should be collaboration between parents and teachers to evaluate grades, compare them to previous performances, and develop a plan to help the child continue the active learning process.

Self-Confidence

For younger children, the best both parties can do is to provide positive support and encouragement until the child gains self-confidence. Every success a child achieves in this process, no matter how small, should be appreciated and celebrated. Active learning may be hindered by a blow to self-esteem, and if so, a pat on the back is necessary to help a child rebuild self-confidence.

Responsibility

Teens may need complex strategies to fulfill their school responsibilities. Giving them more responsibility to take an active role in their learning process can help them realize they have real control over the outcome of their efforts and can work in creating a sense of ownership.

Preschool - Primary School Period;

During this period when they discover and learn new things, being patient with children and encouraging them when things get tough are among the top steps. When faced with a problem, they may feel frustrated and frustrated.

In order not to experience this frustration again, they begin to delay or ignore it. Making them see alternative solutions and increasing the diversity in front of them can be preventive in reducing this frustration and developing dysfunctional defense mechanisms. With the Primary School period, children want to feel that they are successful. While doing this, it will help them to focus on short-term work rather than long-term goals and tasks. Since it is a period when they gradually begin to discover the areas of their interest, enabling them to take part in different activities and directing them to find areas where they feel good in areas such as sports/art are among the effective solutions.

Middle School Period;

With age, responsibilities and expectations also increase. This can cause difficulties in children and adolescents, and with this difficulty, indifference; because when they don't care, they have excuses for the negative results they face: “It would have been better if I had worked.”, “I could have gotten better results if I had done it on time.”... It is much easier to cling to these thoughts than a belief in inadequacy or failure. Therefore, procrastination, pretending to not care, ignoring, which are among the defense mechanisms, begin to appear much more in children's lives during these periods.

SMALL
STEPS
BIG
CHANGES

When children activate their defense mechanisms, reminding them of their resources on how to best fulfill their responsibilities, enabling them to set realistic goals and communicating your expectations from them by considering their potential will activate your coping mechanism and guide them.

High School and Adulthood Period;

“I don't feel like it today, I still have time anyway.”, “I'm a last minute person, then I get more creative.”, “The most important thing is my happiness.” Such thoughts appear as egocentrism, especially at the beginning of adolescence. These thoughts, which distance the person from reality, turn the individual into a state of indifference towards his own affairs, others and the environment. Adolescents and adults don't realize that when they think about these momentary gratifications and their own well-being, they are harming their long-term well-being. While their indifference towards themselves leads to unexpected results that are below their potential, their insensitivity towards their environment can turn into unhappy relationships. How long can young people who think only of themselves but also surrender themselves to short-term temporary pleasures continue this and enjoy life?

It may take time to change habitual behavior patterns at this age. The primary way is not to give up and keep trying. Taking a step, big or small, can turn into a cycle in a different direction. As human beings, we cannot make instant interventions to our thoughts and feelings, but we can change our behavior if we want. With this change in behavior, our feelings and thoughts begin to change in the same direction.

In summary, there can be various reasons for procrastination and ignorance, as well as different solutions. We can both take small steps by noticing our own recklessness/procrastination, and raise awareness of the situation in our children. In this way, we can seize the opportunity to change the causes and consequences of indifference.

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