

The SOARce



Educating, challenging, and inspiring all learners to become contributing, responsible members of a global society.

March 2021



Happy March!

I hope this edition of The SOARce finds your family healthy and well.

It's crazy to think we are approaching the anniversary of the day our "normal" lives came to an abrupt halt. Since that time, as a society, we have had ups, downs, and everything in between.

As we start to work toward a sense of normalcy, it's an opportune time to reflect on what parts of "normal" we anticipate returning to. While we can agree that this past year has been challenging, what are some positives that have

come from 2020? Where might these positives secure a place in your life when we have some semblance of normalcy back? If anything, this past year has afforded us the opportunity to pause and reset - shifting our mindset can help us cultivate gratitude and resiliency.

As always, I hope you gain some new tips and tricks from this edition of the SOARce.

Wishing you and your family all the best!

Melissa Bernard
Student Services Coordinator

UNDERSTANDING MELTDOWNS

Adults have meltdowns, too. Picture this scenario: you get stuck in traffic on your way to work, you forget your lunch at home, your boss provides some difficult feedback, and you're asked to stay late to finish a project. When you return home at the end of the day, you lose it because one of the kids left their shoes in the middle of the kitchen. Are the shoes really the issue? No way -- welcome to an adult meltdown!

A meltdown happens when we hold onto the day's stresses without taking the time to regulate ourselves and release pent-up emotions. What seems so trivial (shoes in the middle of the floor) can cause all of the emotions we didn't process to come rushing out.

Just like us, our children become flooded with emotions when they don't have the opportunity to regulate and process their feelings. When we take a moment to pause in the face of an emotional outburst, we can approach the situation with two questions:

- What is really going on right now?
- What do I need right now?



Not only does asking these questions help you to approach your child with more compassion in a moment of dysregulation, but asking these questions of yourself when you feel overwhelmed with emotions is an act of self-compassion. A win-win all the way around.

RECOGNIZING OUR TRIGGERS



The moment between a trigger and our response is crucial. That moment is the difference between a response that is reactive and emotionally charged or a response that is regulated and productive. Is this easy to do? No way! But, it is something we can work on.

The first thing we need to do is start noticing when we feel triggered. This feeling can manifest in our bodies in a variety of ways - maybe it's a rapid heart rate, feeling warm, feeling shaky, or having tunnel vision. If we work to notice how our body feels when it's triggered, we can take steps to regulate ourselves before responding.

Not everyone regulates their feelings the same way, so it's important to think through what works for you. Maybe it's taking a deep breath, asking for a little space to gather your thoughts, or maybe it's going for a walk. When thinking about how this applies to our children, it's knowing that a dysregulated adult cannot de-escalate a dysregulated child. There's a reason the airlines tell you to put on your oxygen mask first before helping your children with theirs.



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BENEATH THE SURFACE

When it comes to behavior, what we see on the surface is not always the whole story. Feelings are complex, but many times our feelings come out in simplified ways - anger, sadness, happiness, or stress - however, there is so much more to our feelings than what we see.

How does this translate to our children? When we approach our children's behavior and feelings with curiosity we start to notice what's really going on for them. Maybe your child is speaking to you disrespectfully. At first glance, you might think that your child should know better than to speak to you like that. But, when you approach this behavior with curiosity, you might uncover that your child had a bad day at school and never got a chance to process those feelings. This expression of disrespect (anger) is really your child's way of communicating a greater need.

This thinking also works for us, too. When we're angry or stressed, it's a great time to dig deeper into those feelings to uncover what's really going on.

Dr. Marc Brackett, the founder of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, uses the RULER acronym to help us dig deeper into our feelings in order to work toward regulation. You can use this strategy with your children, or you can use this strategy to start learning more about your own feelings. Our secondary students at HPS are also learning about the RULER method to identify and regulate their feelings. Give it a shot!



RULER

- R** - Recognize (What am I feeling right now?)
- U** - Understand (What happened to cause me to feel this way?)
- L** - Label (Assign the feeling a name)
- E** - Express (How am I expressing this feeling? Is it helpful or hurtful?)
- R** - Regulate (How can I regulate this feeling? Do I want to feel more/less of this feeling?)

LOOKING IN VS. LOOKING OUT



When it comes to siblings, many families strive toward making things equal in order to avoid sibling rivalry and decrease conflict; however, in our pursuit to keep things fair we inadvertently set the stage for sibling competition. According to Dr. Becky Kennedy, NYC psychiatrist, when we make things fair we increase our children's hypervigilance. We condition our children to orient outward, noting what their siblings have or receive, to determine what they need.

So what can we do instead? One of the most important skills we can equip our children with is helping them to look inward to get their needs met. By helping our children look inward to discover their needs, we are assisting them with developing a skill that works not only within the sibling dynamic but will carry into adulthood as well. When our focus is outward we are constantly comparing our needs to someone else's - what do other people have? This need for comparison is unproductive, exhausting, and completely takes away from our true needs. By helping our children look inward from an early age, we are teaching them that they don't have to look to others to get their needs met.

IN

VS.

OUT

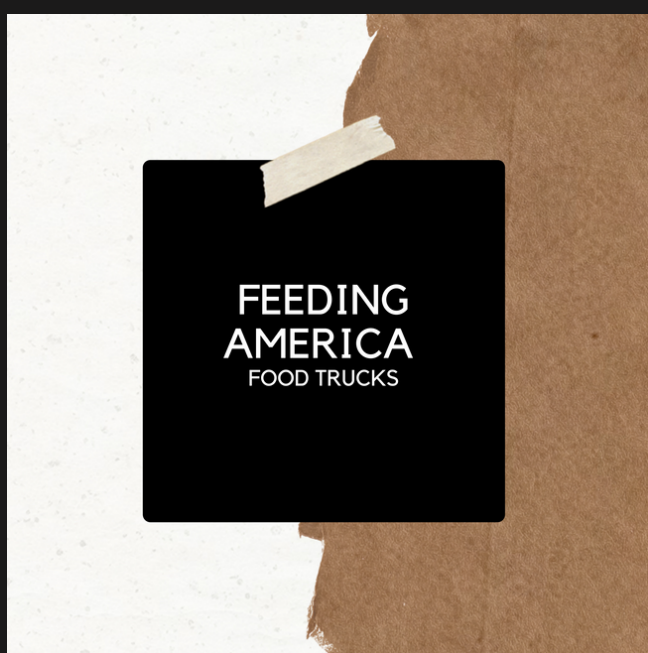
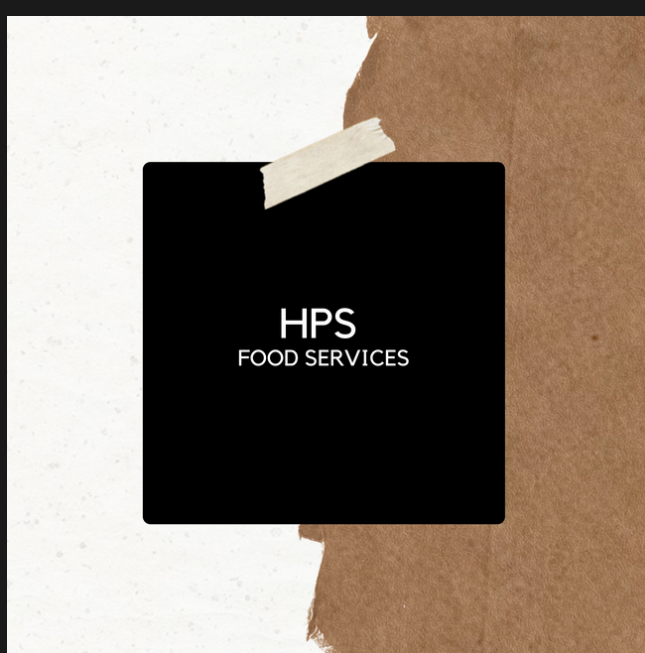
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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

During this time, you may have questions or need to seek assistance in some way. Click on the icons below to access local community supports for meals, unemployment, and various other needs.



HPS COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Did you know that you can follow HPS Student Services on social media? We have active accounts on Instagram and Facebook. The hope for these social media accounts is to deliver digestible and relevant social/emotional content that you can implement in some way -- at home with your child(ren), or even in your own personal life. Click on the icons below for direct access -- we'd love to have you follow along!



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