

9 June 2017

Dear College Students

TRAUMA AWARENESS

“There are wounds that never show on the body that are deeper than anything that bleeds.” Laurel Hamilton

Remember Oakhill cares. This is such an important time to be kind and patient with each other. As we are all aware, our community is going through a very challenging time. Some of us have been more affected than others by the fires; some of us just feel deeply for others. There are special ways to be helpful to someone in trauma.

1. Each person’s feelings are valid.
2. These feelings can include anything from: irritability, anger, weepiness, sadness, survivor guilt, fury, emptiness or being overwhelmed and sometimes feelings that don’t have a name.
3. Don’t worry if you aren’t feeling any of these things – that’s normal too.
4. It is important not to overshare or exaggerate factual information.
5. Please make sure you do not spread rumours. This could create unnecessary stress or anxiety.
6. If you or your friends are battling to sleep, if you feel like you have a movie or images playing over and over in your head, if you don’t want to eat or eat too much, if you feel unusually moody or just don’t want to be around anyone, these could be signs that you are traumatised.
7. Remember these are normal responses to trauma, but if you continue to feel this way after a couple of weeks it is no longer normal. Please talk to a teacher you are comfortable with, your mentor, house head or Mrs Warren. Mrs Warren has set up a professionally trained task team to assist her in offering specialised trauma support. Don’t wait for it to go away by itself.

There are things you can do to help yourself now:

1. Reach out to others.
2. Cry if you need to.
3. Get as much exercise as you can.
4. Rest.
5. Listen to music.
6. Try and get back into your normal routine as soon as possible.
7. Go to sleep at the same time every night.
8. Write down your feelings if you can’t find a way to talk about them.

The care shown in this incredible community is already profound, and is in line with the ethos of Oakhill. Please take care of yourselves, give yourselves permission to let the upcoming exams be a welcome distraction. Study well, and take care of yourselves and each other.

Although College students are on study leave now, they are invited to seek help from the counselling team at school. Remember that there will also be study venues available at school from Monday for those who need these.

Kind regards,

Mr De Villiers
(On behalf of Mrs Warren and the counselling team)