



Good luck on all your exams . . .

Congratulations to the class of 2012 . . .

Have a great summer, everyone

COPING WITH THE **STRESS**

Regents, finals and sensationalized press coverage, that's a lot to deal with in a few weeks. Here are some articles that can help us understand the situation and deal with the effects.

The Community Feels It, But We Deal Individually

BY KAROLINA SUROWANIEC

I bet there isn't a person who hasn't admitted they are stressed at one point in their life. But have you ever taken some time to think about what stress really means or how it affects you? Have you taken some time to reflect and think about where are those uninvited feelings coming from and what can you do to help yourself?



Dr. Adam D. Brown of the NYU Child Study Center

I have recently interviewed a psychologist, Dr. Adam D. Brown, a licensed clinical psychologist at the NYU Child Study Center, and a researcher on youth and families affected by traumatic stress. He clarifies the issue of "stress" from the professional point of view in his responses below.

The "event" Dr. Brown is referring to is the recent case involving one of our teachers and a student that was covered in newspapers and

on TV. The following are his answers to my questions:

When an event such as this touches an entire community such as a school, everyone is affected collectively, but may respond in their own way due to individual factors. The fact that everyone was already stressed by finals and Regents made everyone more susceptible to having a negative reaction to the event.

"A definition of "stress" from a clinical perspective would be: environmental factors that contribute to negative outcomes which impact a person's emotional, behavioral, and sometimes medical functioning.

Environmental factors could include lower level stressful factors, such as running late, being stuck in traffic, studying for a test, public speaking, etc. to higher level factors such as being mugged, being in a car accident or natural disaster, having a serious illness, losing a loved one, etc.

These events can effect us emotionally, such as: feeling anxious, being distracted, worrying excessively, being pre-occupied, difficulty concentrating, startling easily, crying, being grouchy or cranky or easily angered.

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Where's The Boundary?

BY HAIRALY VOLQUEZ

There have been many controversies lately pertaining to teacher-student relationships. People go back and forth about whether teachers can build friendships with their students or not. People ask questions like: are there any boundaries between teacher-student relationships? If so, what are they? Can they communicate through the internet or by cells? If so what are the limitations?

People are asking a lot of questions, and experts have suggestions and advice.

On the website of **Education Week**, a national education newspaper, (<http://blogs.edweek.org>), Rick Wormeli a retired teacher and author of books on teaching, responded to the blog saying, "I used to think teachers could be friends with their students, but then I realized I was confusing 'friend' with 'friendly.'"

Rick is showing something that happens quite often. There are boundaries that teachers and students must respect. "We can grow closer to students when we share a common interest or work on long-term projects, but in every interaction we remain teacher/student, mentor/

mentee, not true friend, and this is wise."

On the website of the American School Counselor Association (<http://www.ascaschoolcounselor.org>), they give an example of a student and a counselor and ask people what would they do in that type of situation.

Basically the scenario is about a counselor helping a boy who barely gets attention from his family and is turning to the school counselor for attention. They ask if it would be okay if the counselor drove the kid to a wrestling match that he had and support him. Many people said

A retired teacher and author responded to the blog saying, "I used to think teachers could be friends with their students, but then I realized I was confusing 'friend' with 'friendly.'"

it seemed ok, due to the fact that he didn't have much support to begin with.

But then they threw in the part that you would take him out to eat after the match and then drive him back home. After they threw that in, people were saying that it was a definite NO, that they wouldn't do that, even though the student needed someone to support him. This example shows that in the most complicated situations there is a solution without going to the danger zone.

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Suggestions for handling stress

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Physical symptoms can include increased heart rate, sweating, pacing, impaired sleep or eating, etc. There is also evidence that chronic stress can impact the immune system, and make us more vulnerable to physical illness as well.

Teenagers and adults who are stressed may look to self soothe by eating more, smoking cigarettes, or looking to alcohol or drugs. They may be less productive at school or work, and call out sick.

The American Psychological Association offers these tips on managing stress:

Identify the cause. You may find that your stress arises from something that's easy to correct. A psychologist can help you define and analyze these stressors, and develop action plans for dealing with them.

Monitor your moods. If you feel stressed during the day, write down what caused it along your thoughts and moods. Again, you may find the cause to be less serious than you first thought.

'People respond in different ways to stressful events depending on a number of factors, including the severity of the event, how close it hits them personally, and individual factors, such as level of emotional stability, what else is going on in their life, their own history of trauma or upsetting events.'

Make time for yourself at least two or three times a week. Even ten minutes a day of "personal time" can help refresh your mental outlook and slow down your body's

stress response systems. Turn off the phone, spend time alone in your room, exercise, or meditate to music.

Walk away when you're angry. Before you react, take time to mentally regroup by counting to 10. Then look at the situation again. Walking or other physical activities will also help you work off steam.

Analyze your schedule. Assess your priorities and delegate whatever tasks you can (e.g., order out dinner after a busy day, share household responsibilities). Eliminate tasks that are "shoulds" but not "musts."

Set reasonable standards for yourself and others. Don't expect perfection.

People respond in different ways to stressful events such as those at MTL depending on a number of factors, including the severity of the event, how close it hits them personally, and individual factors, such as level of emotional stability prior to the stressful event, what else is going on in their life, their own history of prior trauma or upsetting events.

In addition to being shocked that something like that could happen in your own community, the presence of police, reporters, etc. makes it seem more shocking, and more difficult to move on and get back to life as normal.

Most people will react initially, and then be able to move on. Those who are still struggling are those who are more susceptible to stress. The whole community needs help and support, but those who are having a more acute reaction may need to speak to someone individually, either a school counselor or outside professional help. The best thing the school and also parents can do is to help students get back to a normal routine, keep things as consistent as possible, and look for signs that someone may be having a more difficult time than others, and offer support.

Teacher-Student Boundaries

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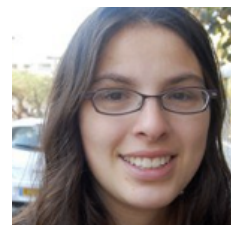
An article from the journal **Teaching and Teacher Education**, "(Boundary dilemmas in teacher-student relationships: Struggling with 'the line'" - http://66.199.228.237/boundary/boundary_violations_and_physician_impairment/boundary-issues.pdf), interviews teachers. One issue is how much personal information a teacher should disclose to students. For the teacher Michelle, "the student who tried to tell her about 'making out' with a boy demonstrated where that border existed for her. Regardless of the motives of that student, Michelle was not willing to engage in that type of conversation. However, she also shared there were other students with whom she would feel comfortable engaging in conversation about their personal lives."

The article concludes that "how much a teacher becomes involved or withdraws is the extent to which teachers are able to maintain their teacher identity." The "line" is different for different teachers; people have different boundaries.

With a News Reporter, What Are Your Rights?

BY MARLENY MENDOZA

Reporters chased down student Yudioscar Lantigua for an entire block, although she repeatedly stated that she had no comment regarding the teacher-student news reports that the school faced. Some students said that were asked to comment on the situation, even though they didn't know anything about it, and some felt they had to give a response.



Philissa Cramer,
GothamSchools

Philissa Cramer, managing editor of GothamSchools, which is an independent website dedicated to covering news from New York City schools, stated, "Students have the right to give no answer."

She explained that newspapers like the New York Post are not part of the Department of Education. They have a right to ask questions of anyone, but people have the right not to answer. She added, "But you wouldn't want someone to write an article without talking to people at the school."

Here are some ethics guidelines for interviews with juveniles from the Radio Television Digital News Association (<http://www.rtdna.org>) : (1) In what light will this juvenile be shown? What is their understanding or ability to understand how viewers or listeners might perceive the interview? (2) How mature is this juvenile? How aware is he/she of the ramifications of his/her comments? (3) What motivations does the juvenile have in cooperating with this interview? (4) How do you know what this young person says is true? (5) Do they know they are talking to a reporter?