

Counseling Communiqué

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Counseling Department
<http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/counseling/index/shtml>

Make Banana Bread!

My preschooler was having trouble on the playground, and we were strategizing how she could handle hurt feelings. I encouraged her to branch out with new friends to make the best of a crummy situation. Hoping she would understand the analogy, I introduced the concept of making lemonade from lemons. In her brief experience with the world, she understands that lemons are indeed sour while lemonade is quite sweet. She surprised me by providing her own example of turning brown, squishy bananas into banana bread! She gets it! I was both charmed with her clever application and proud of her resilience.

We all face a variety of disappointments in our daily lives. We don't get into our first, second or third choice schools. We can't afford to pay the \$40,000 price tag of our dream college. Our summer job disappears to someone else. Our hearts get broken at the Prom. These things happen. To all of us.

We get disappointed in ourselves, as well. We make poor decisions that get us in trouble at school, with parents or even police. We let homework slide and create an avalanche of Bs, Cs and even Ds. We think of a hundred ways we could have handled situations differently. We feel regret, guilt, even shame.

But what matters most is *what happens next*. No matter how bad a situation may be, we always have the ability to make it better *by the way we choose to handle things*. By making banana bread.

Many seniors will be licking their wounds this summer and finding ways to feel excited about their college plans. Some may find great pride in working to pay part of their tuition. Some may choose a meaningful internship or service project that pays in experience rather than cash. Broken hearts may finally pay attention to someone that was quietly there all along.

I encourage students to find strength in moving on. To reframe the way they look at a situation that allows them to feel proud of their choices. To answer, "Yes, sir," to the officer that has pulled them over. To study for that last exam anyway because they will be remembered for their effort. To rise from the ashes and put their lives back together. To make banana bread.



Sara Clinton
School Counselor

Summer Volunteer Opportunities Fair

A range of volunteer opportunities -- continuing and one-time events -- will be featured at the annual Summer Volunteer Opportunities Fair to be held during all lunches on Tuesday, June 9, in Common B. Students are encouraged to stop by to pick up information or sign up. The information from the fair will be available in the Counseling Center after the fair until the end of the school year.

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Dates of Interest June

- 5 Graduation
- 6 SAT administered
- 9 Summer Volunteer Opportunities Fair
- 13 ACT administered
- 18 English Finals in English classes
- 19 English Finals in English classes
- 22 Final Exams-1st & 2nd period classes
- 23 Final Exams-3rd & 4th period classes
- 24 Final Exams-5th & 6th period classes
- 25 Final Exams-7th & 8th period classes

Final Exams are at
7:30 and 9:15 A.M.

Students will be dismissed at 10:45 A.M.

Congratulations to the Class of 2009!



Seniors are Surveyed

Early in May seniors were asked to complete a survey administered by the school's Follow-up Study Committee. The survey sought students' opinions on the high school's program and services as well as their suggestions for improving the school. This is the sixteenth year that all seniors have been surveyed. Survey results will be available in the Counseling Center in the fall.

Don't Forget



After making a final college decision, it's important to notify all the other colleges where a student was accepted and won't be attending. This in turn will make the day of another student who was just hoping to get in! Also, as a nice gesture, students might send thank you notes to the people who helped with their going-to-college quest.



The College Freshman Experience

Students vary in their reactions to living away from home for the first time, but the following stages are described by college counselors as a typical freshman experience.

1. **Early Summer Anticipation**—The days immediately following graduation bring feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment as students look forward to the challenges and excitement of college life.
2. **Midsummer Anxiety**—Students may become anxious as they realize they will soon leave all that is familiar.
3. **Late Summer Panic**—During the final days of summer vacation, the student may become overwhelmed by the idea of the first encounter with the new roommate, etc.
4. **The Honeymoon**—Upon arrival at college, many students hold unreasonable expectations for academic excellence and social satisfaction. They are prepared to be delighted by everything they see.
5. **End of the Honeymoon**—Reality sets in during the early weeks of the first semester. Students begin to realize that college is not all glamour and fun. They often experience hard work, loneliness, and disappointment. It can also be a time of overpowering homesickness.
6. **The Grass is Always Greener**—About mid-semester, some students will begin to think of transferring to another college.
7. **Coping Behavior**—Well into the first semester, students will begin to develop their ability to use the college's facilities, to conduct real conversations with roommates, and to expand their circle of friends.
8. **Renewed Fear of Failure**—With the onset of first semester final examinations, students suddenly realize the great amount of work and organization which must be done.
9. **You Can't Go Home Again**—The first extended visit home, usually at the end of the first semester, can be traumatic. Students learn that family life has gone on without them. Home becomes only a place to visit.
10. **Putting It All Together**—Sometime during the second semester students will begin to view college as a total experience. They will come to see that classes, informal dormitory discussions, parties and other fragments of college life are actually related and part of the cohesive whole.

Resources for Grads

Even after students graduate, the resources of the Counseling Department are still available to them. Whether transferring from one college to another, entering college as a freshman after a year or more off, or just wanting to use the counseling library, the Counseling Center resources are available. Don't forget, the counseling web site is accessible and easy to use, too!



Information for Juniors and Parents

A Note to the Class of 2010

Are the seniors gone yet? If so, are you feeling like a senior yourself? You are! Congratulations on making it to this very significant stage in your life and education. As the summer approaches you may be faced with growing questions and concerns regarding your future career or college goals. You will be presented with the task of looking critically at schools to evaluate whether their programs will offer you the opportunities that will get you where you want to go in your life and career. You may also notice that you are not alone with these thoughts of the future...welcome to the adult world!

To help alleviate your concerns, try to take advantage of the summer months to get out and investigate as many colleges as you can. Ask your parents to help you by planning family trips to areas where you think you may want to attend college. This type of travel will allow you to explore colleges in that area and to compare them to what you have read about and seen either in person or through your research. You can get a sense of different geographical environments, learn about cultural and entertainment opportunities in the area and answer some questions about how far from home you may feel comfortable going.

Before you travel to look at schools, use the Naviance/Family Connection program to gain up-to-date information about different colleges—www.connection.naviance.com/ab. Also, make sure you take time to finish the personality profile or the career interest inventory, resumé and senior questionnaire and encourage your parents to complete the parent response form which you can find there as well.



Summer Suggestions

The summer between the junior and senior year can be busy and productive both for parents and students. No matter what students plan to do after high school, the following are some summer activities that can help them plan for the future. Students who are planning to go directly to college upon graduation have a number of steps they can take during the summer.

- Use the Naviance program to research schools.
- Continue to work on a list of colleges.
- Plan visits and schedule interviews at colleges.
- Talk to college students about their college experiences.
- If your test scores need improvement, work on these areas.
- Look at information on where students with similar records have been accepted, rejected, or placed on a waiting list on your Naviance web site.
- Families should also come to an understanding about financing a college education.
- Start the college selection process early and make your senior year bearable.
- Familiarize yourself with the Common Application and supplements, when applicable.



Students who think they may not be ready for college in a year may want to look into an interim program. The Counseling Department's web site has a number of resources which may help students in their search. These students need to work on the same issues and activities as students who plan to enter college directly upon graduation, but with one more consideration—they need to apply to colleges which will allow them to defer their entrance for a year. Students who plan to work or enter the military after graduation can use some time during the summer to investigate various alternatives. No matter what students' plans are after high school, the more they do in the summer before their senior year, the less they will have to "cram" into the fall.

Bulletin Board



Counseling Department Summer Hours

At the end of regular hours on Thursday, June 25th the High School Counseling Department will be closed. Counselors will not be able to meet requests for summer meeting times and will only be available on a limited schedule for new student registration and scheduling conflict duties. Secretarial coverage will be available for scheduling or registration issues. When a secretary is not available, please follow the directions on the answering system that will direct you on how to proceed with your request.

We look forward to seeing you again in the fall. If you have questions or concerns, please speak to your child's counselor by June 25th. Thank you and have a safe and relaxing summer.

Summer Jobs and Volunteer Opportunities



Looking for a way to explore your interests, make some money or contribute to the community this summer? Check out the Jobs and Volunteer Opportunities listing on the AB web site (under Quick Links). The sites are updated often, so check back if you don't see something that's right for you the first time you look.



Have a Great Summer!