



# COUNSELLOR'S CORNER - HOLIDAYS

It is hard to believe that we are in the final weeks of the 2022 school year, and the festive season is knocking on our door! All students, families, teaching, and support staff have had a challenging year as we have navigated ongoing COVID related stress, full time face to face learning, rescheduled camps, teacher absences and unseasonably cold weather – just to name a few. It has been inspiring to see the determination of our students continue to show up for themselves and others and regularly apply themselves.

Despite being new to the College this year, I feel honoured to have gotten to know so many of the incredible students that attend Merici, and I am grateful for the broader school community for accepting me into your lives and making me feel so welcome. I am excited to welcome our new Year 7 cohort for 2023 and look forward to broadening my relationship with our continuing students while working to enhance student wellbeing and positive learning outcomes.

For our Year 12 students, I know that the past few weeks have been an uncomfortable ride of immense emotion, stress, excitement, and uncertainty. Change is an inevitable, necessary, and often positive part of life and big life transitions can be uncertain times for all of us. For parents and caregivers, while your teenager might be rejoicing in their excitement at never having to don the Merici uniform or attend another long day of classes, you too might feel relieved but might notice feeling sad or a sense of loss that the years of parenting a child through school is over. The transition from high school to further education or paid work is a critical stage for young people as they move into the adult world and feeling sad about the end of your child's schooling is a normal part of our human experience.

It can be helpful for you and your school leaver to think about the practical side of your future together. Talking about further study or education, work, and travel and navigating the practicalities of living arrangements and expenses. The better prepared you and your teenager feel, the easier it will be to overcome strong emotions that show up.

To all our students, it has been a pleasure to watch you overcome adversity and strive for your own individual success. A gentle reminder that as human beings, you are enough just as you are and that your worth is more than your grades or academic success. Whether you did well, did poorly, failed or didn't turn up - you are enough. And although on one can go back and make a brand-new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand-new ending.

Christmas and the holiday season can be a time of fun and frivolity, but it can also be stressful and take a toll on our mental health and wellbeing. Remember to look out for yourself, your family and others and reach out to ask, 'Are You Ok?' if you're worried about someone. The R U Ok website offers some easy conversation guides if you are unsure where to start : [How to ask "Are you OK?" | R U OK?](#)

For students and families who might need some additional support over the school holiday break, a reminder, or the resources that you might find of benefit:

For Students:

- [MindMap](#) support young people to navigate Canberra's mental health system and find mental health services, supports and resources (12pm-11pm/7 days)
- [headspace online mental health service](#) speak with professional counsellors over the phone or webchat (9am-1am/7 days)

- [13YARN](#) (13 92 76, available 24/7) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Support crisis support phone line
- [Kids Helpline](#) (1800 55 1800, available 24/7)
- headspace [How to stay healthy over the holidays](#)
- Reach Out [Ways to chill for cheap](#)
- For Parents:
- Headspace factsheet [Keeping healthy over the holidays - for friends and family](#)
- [Reach Out Parents](#) has information for parents and carers on a range of topics.
- [Raising Children](#) has tips and advice around a range of topics that can assist parents in supporting young people.
- Beyond Blue has some tips on [supporting healthy home and habits](#) and [how to talk about mental health](#) if you are wanting to start a conversation with your young person
- ReachOut has a [One-on-one support service](#) which provides free coaching to parents and carers of teenagers.
- Parentline ACT provides telephone counselling to parents and carers. Call 02 6287 3833, Monday to Friday 9am-4pm
- If you need immediate support and assistance call Access Mental Health on 1800 629 354 or 6205 1065 24 hours, 7 days a week.

If you or your loved one are in a life-threatening situation, please call 000 immediately.

It is important to note that School counselling is not a crisis service but should you feel your daughter may benefit from school counselling when school resumes, please speak with your daughter's house co-ordinator or email me on : [counsellors@merici.act.edu.au](mailto:counsellors@merici.act.edu.au)

I wish you all a happy, healthy, and wholesome school break and encourage you to make time to slow down, enjoy the little things and make more space for the things that bring you joy. Remember to take care of one another.

Ms Hannah Johnson

Merici College Counsellor