

# Northwest Local School District



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## Who are your district social workers?

Northwest Local School District currently employs 2 full-time school social workers, Mrs. Lindsey Gibson, and Ms. Cristen Casteel. The district school social worker role is to serve as a resource providing intervening services to strengthen the home/school/community partnership, and address barriers to student learning within a full range of comprehensive support.

Mrs. Gibson and Ms. Casteel are available to provide services to students, parents, families, and school personnel. Examples of services include, but are not limited to: providing crisis intervention, developing intervention strategies to improve academic success, assisting with conflict resolution and anger management, developing appropriate social interaction skills, assisting children understand and accept themselves and others, working with parents to facilitate their involvement in their children's education, assist with alleviating family stress to enable children to function more effectively in school, assisting parents with accessing programs and wrap-around services, assessing students with mental health concerns, implementing professional development and training programs, assist with behavior management in the classroom, and provide direct support to students, families, and staff as needed during crisis situations.

### For Parents

The American Psychological Association suggests these tips to help parents effectively manage holiday stress:

- 1) Strengthen social connections
- 2) Initiate conversations about the season
- 3) Set expectations
- 4) Keep things in perspective
- 5) Take care of yourself

*Read more about implementing these suggestions on the next page.*

## Holiday Stress

### *Did you know...*

According to a recent "*Stress in America*" survey, adults are more likely to find family responsibilities stressful than they have in the past. For many of us, the holiday season can bring an increased sense of family responsibility and, along with it, additional feelings of stress. Advertisements about the joys of the season can seem lost on us as we scurry around trying to do even more than usual. It's easy to feel overwhelmed. Unfortunately, we may turn to unhealthy stress management behaviors such as overindulging in eating or drinking to keep going. These actions don't help and often make us feel worse. There are better, healthier and longer-lasting techniques we can use to make holiday stress – and other stressful times – more manageable.

### NEW!!!

## Parent Support Group

NWLSD and The Village Empowerment Network have partnered to offer NWLSD parents of middle and/or high school students a 10-week support group series, beginning in January, 2019. More information can be found under "Resources" on the next page.

## Tips and Tools

### Strengthen Social Connections

We know that strong, supportive relationships help us manage all kinds of challenges. So, we can view the holidays as a time to reconnect with the positive people in our lives. Accepting help and support from those who care about us can help alleviate stress. Also, volunteering at a local charity on our own or with family can be another way to make connections; helping others often makes us feel better, too.

### Initiate Conversations about the Season

It can be helpful to have conversations with our kids about the variety of different holiday traditions our families, friends and others may celebrate. Parents can use this time as an opportunity to discuss how some families may not participate in the same holiday traditions as others. Not everyone needs to be the same. It is important to teach open-mindedness about others and their celebrations.

### Set Expectations

It is helpful to set realistic expectations for gifts and holiday activities. Depending on a child's age, we can use this opportunity to teach kids about the value of money and responsible spending. We need to remember to pare down our own expectations, too. Instead of trying to take on everything, we need to identify the most important holiday tasks and take small concrete steps to accomplish them.

### Keep Things in Perspective

On the whole, the holiday season is short. It helps to maintain a broader context and a longer-term perspective. We can ask ourselves, what's the worst thing that could happen this holiday? Our greatest fears may not happen and, if they do, we can tap our strengths and the help of others to manage them. There will be time after the holiday season to follow up or do more of things we've overlooked or did not have the time to do during the holidays.

### Take Care of Yourself

It is important that we pay attention to our own needs and feelings during the holiday season. We can find fun, enjoyable and relaxing activities for ourselves and our families. By keeping our minds and bodies healthy, we are primed to deal with stressful situations when they arise. Consider cutting back television viewing for kids and getting the family out together for fresh air and a winter walk. Physical activity can help us feel better and sleep well, while reducing sedentary time and possible exposure to stress-inducing advertisements.

## Resources

[NEW: Parent Project Support Group](#)

[7 ways to Help Reduce Your Child's Holiday Stress](#)

[Children's Home of Cincinnati Newsletter](#)

## \*\*\*FREE\*\*\* LOCAL FAMILY-FRIENDLY HOLIDAY EVENTS

### [Antique Christmas at the Taft](#)

*Nov. 2 through Jan. 6, 2019*

Escape to a winter wonderland of Christmas past at the Taft's annual display of antique ornaments, decorations, and toys. Kids will delight in seeing the old decorations, and parents will enjoy the festive ambiance at the Taft. ***Please note that, while the exhibit runs Wednesday through Sunday, admission to the Taft is only free on Sundays!***

### [Comfort & Joyride](#)

*Nov. 23-24, Dec. 1, Dec. 8 and Dec. 15*  
Enjoy FREE rides on the Cincinnati Bell Connector! (From 3-5 pm on these days, holiday music will be playing for a fun holiday singalong!)

### [Santa at Carew Tower](#)

- *Fridays and Saturdays, Nov. 23-Dec. 22 from 12-8 pm; Sundays, Nov. 25-Dec. 23, 12-6 pm; Monday, Dec. 24, 12-5 pm*
- *African American Santa visits on Nov. 29, Dec. 6, Dec. 13 and Dec. 20 from 4-7 pm*

Bring your own camera for photos with downtown's *only* Santa in a festive North Pole setting. **Free!**

### [Reindeer Games](#)

*Dec. 7 at 10 am and 12:30 pm*  
Fantastic Free Fridays at Miami University Middletown give kids a taste of the arts – for free! Holiday traditions are almost as old as the holidays themselves. Join in all our “Reindeer Games” as TCT takes on the holidays – game-show style, featuring Santa's four-hoofed sleigh team as both hosts and contestants. This TCT world premiere, written by Kenneth Jones, has plenty of audience participation, laughs, good cheer and celebration!

### NWLSD Social Worker Contact Information

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