Many students do not reach proficiency on their MCAS scores. Often this has less to do with Math, English or Science lessons and more with life, social, emotional and behavioral reasons. BRRHS has received a grant from the state to help students reach proficiency in all areas. This is an exciting opportunity to help every student, insuring that s/he achieves a very important goal –

Sheri Damon, LMHC
Behavioral Consultant
sldamonacct@yahoo.com
781-834-5750

**Curriculum Introduction**

**Why’s** Why do we take MCAS, why are you here, why do some people not reach proficiency on MCAS, why should you care?

**What** you want for your future, for yourself

**What is motivation**

What we mean by **acceptance** Accept strengths, weaknesses, help, encouragement, constructive criticism without judgment

**What is the commitment** Look at the areas above and work hard with the team
**What is success?** Broaden the definition. It takes all to make the world go around!!

What this program will offer: Individual skills tutoring; small group teaching focused on identifying target areas; small group motivation/organization/behavioral skills counseling, mentoring; liaison for follow-up.

**Table of Contents**

Module 1: All my neighbors that…ice breaker
Definition of success exercise – Self Assessment; Notecard; PASS; Locus of control, Secret to success

Module 2: Tossing puppies ice breaker; Tin foil exercise; Regulating emotions activity/lesson; 5 pleasant events to share

Module 3: Twister Ice Breaker; Thinking, Behavior and Feelings; Cognitive Behavioral Triangle lesson – Untwisting your thinking exercise

Module 4: “Speed Helping” Relationship ice breaker Describe your safe place exercise Relaxation & Refocusing plan

Module 5: Building block ice breaker Stages of Change exercise – Timeline Interpersonal effectiveness exercise GIVE

Module 6: Crisis survival ice breaker – Life Boat Attention and Focus Information with Self Esteem Check-up exercise
Module 7: “Telephone with a twist” ice breaker - Stress tolerance self soothe skills

Module 8: Speed Round Q & A ice breaker - Humor as a survival strength

Module 9: Conflict Resolution $100 bill ice breaker - Conflict Resolution Exercises

Module 10: Conflict Resolution Town Plan ice breaker - Interpersonal Effectiveness Exercises

**Support in Group**

**Group Format**

1. **Code of behavior (Group contract):** There is a code of behavior for Bootcamp which includes confidentiality, respect to each member, membership rules and attendance expectations.
2. **Model supportive behavior:** Sharing will receive a high level of social support.
3. **Only discuss group issues in group discussions:** It is only appropriate to talk about group issues, not about problems with individuals outside the group setting. If there are any problems between individuals then these should be sorted out before or after group discussions.
4. **Early intervention:** When a pattern of negative social behavior starts to develop, the group will act to change that pattern earlier rather than later.
5. **Positive comments:** During group discussions, compliment individual participants on their contribution. Try to use their name each time, e.g., “That’s a really good point, John, it is helpful for me when you....” Encourage positive feedback where appropriate. This may seem corny and fake, but if it is consciously used when there is real justification for a compliment, then it can help to raise the general level of self and other respect.
6. **Individual counseling:** If someone is not socially supporting the group a leader will take the participant aside and talk with them about ways in which they can be more positively involved through the program.
7. **Removal of participant:** If a participants’ behavior continues to significantly disrupt the development of the group and other individuals, then the student will be asked to leave normal group activities.
Sign-in & Snack

Ice Breaker
- create a positive group atmosphere
- help people to relax
- break down social barriers
- energize & motivate
- help people to think outside the box
- help people to get to know one another

Progress Check-in

MCAS Bootcamp Exercise

The Aggressor

Discussion

Saves & Tosses

Module 1: Success

**Goal:** To understand that success is in the eye of the beholder and believing that you can be successful goes a long way in helping you achieve success. Fear of success or fear that you will not succeed can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

**Activities:** Quote discussion, PASS, student self assessment and notecards

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit.” - Aristotle

Being successful, whether personal or business requires good habits.

In the business world, you need to form habits that allow you to do your homework. Read the newspaper, scout out opportunities, and take time each day to dedicate specifically to your endeavor.

Relationship successes involve habits such as identifying the other persons likes and dislikes, understanding their situations and background. Insight into their wants and desires. Once again, it is important to foster habits that will
enable you to understand them in order to attain a successful relationship with them.

Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other one thing – Abraham Lincoln

Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful. – Albert Schweitzer

There are no gains without pains. – Benjamin Franklin

Success is counted sweetest By those who ne'er succeed. To comprehend a nectar Requires sorest need. – Emily Dickinson

I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life and that is why I succeed. – Michael Jordan

MCAS SECRETS TO SUCCESS

P Physical: Take care of yourself, includes health, eating, sleeping

A Activity: Engage your body exercises from walks, to working out to playing

S Safe and secure: Do one thing each day to make yourself feel competent & in control

S Substances: Avoid any mood altering substances including coffee and excessive sugar

Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work. Thomas A. Edison
US inventor (1847 - 1931)
BRRHS Student Self Assessment

Student Name__________________________________________________   Date__________________

Check the column that most closely describes you. There are no correct answers, so check what you feel applies!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I...</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Hardly Ever</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer in class or ask questions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate appropriate hall behavior.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Am on time for class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow instructions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disrupt class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come prepared for class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am respectful toward peers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am respectful toward teachers and staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help a teacher when asked.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay attention in class.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take responsibility for my actions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stay afterschool for extra help.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in extra-curricular activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am satisfied with my current academic progress.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel that a high school diploma is important to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel that getting a high school diploma is important to my family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have friends and people who support me.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTE CARD

• Name
• Locus of Control (How did you end up coming here?)
• Success/Failure (Why do you succeed at something? Why do you fail?)
• Goal for yourself for the next 4 weeks
• Self Esteem (What are your strengths, weaknesses, how do you think others see you?)

Module 2: Regulation of Emotions

**Goal:** To understand that our emotions influence everything that we do, including our memory, concentration and production – all needed to do well on MCAS.

**Activities:** Discussion about what emotions are, recognizing our own emotions and strategies to regulate and appropriately express our emotions to achieve success. Discuss article regarding children and emotions.

Emotions exist!

Every day of our lives emotions interact with what we do, see, think, how we behave.

Emotions communicate with others.

Emotions organize and motivate our actions.

Emotions give us information about a situation.

Learning to regulate our emotions will give us the opportunity to prioritize. Think of your emotional regulator as a dial that you can turn up or down. Now learn when you need to do this.
See Model Describing Emotions

Practice using events from the pleasant event checklist handout as “distracters”.

**Emotion Scale**

Recognize the range emotions can run, fill in additional emotions and what happens in you when you get to the outer limits.

Normal Emotions/Feelings:

**BEHAVIOR**

- Happy, Sad, Scared, Nervous, Angry
- Depression, Suicidality
- Anxiety, Self Hate
- Elation
- Rage, Homicidality

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**Module 3: Thinking, Behavior and Feelings**

**Goal:** To understand important connection between thinking, feelings and behavior with a particular focus on “behavior” related to test taking such as MCAS.

**Activities:** Discussion of the cognitive behavior triangle and completing thinking handouts from CBT manual.

There is an important connection between our thinking, our feelings and our behavior. This connection impact everything we do including test-taking success!

Cognitive-Behavioral Triangle.

- **THOUGHTS**
- **FEELINGS**
- What is conflict?
## Untwisting Thinking Handout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of “Twisted” Thinking</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>What You Can Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All or nothing thinking</td>
<td>You see things in black and white, no middle ground.</td>
<td>Think in shades of gray: use words like “sometimes” instead of “always”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortune Telling</td>
<td>You anticipate things will turn out badly, predictions are etched in stone.</td>
<td>Be a detective. Look for the facts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind Reading</td>
<td>You are convinced someone is negative toward you.</td>
<td>Check things out with the person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnification/Catastrophizing</td>
<td>You exaggerate the importance of the situation and predict terrible consequences.</td>
<td>Check the reality of your thoughts – assess the situation by asking questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disqualifying the Positive/Minimizing</td>
<td>You reject positive outcomes by suggesting that they “don’t matter”.</td>
<td>Make a list of all that has gone right that day or ask a friend for their opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Emotional Reasoning</td>
<td>You connect the negatives you are feeling with the experience of the situation ie. “because I am nervous what I have to say must not be important”</td>
<td>Label your emotion and remember it will pass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Should” Statements</td>
<td>You convince yourself to do something with rigid and extreme rules.</td>
<td>Eliminate words like “should” and ask yourself what you would expect someone else to do in the same situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labeling</td>
<td>Mistakes are replaced with labels for yourself that are negative.</td>
<td>Describe the behavior/mistake in terms of specific facts and separate the behavior from your definition of yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalization/Self-Blame</td>
<td>You take excessive responsibility for situations that may not even be in your control.</td>
<td>Identify what you could or could not do about an outcome, then recognize that you did your best.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Module 4:

**Goal:** To understand that distress/extreme stress negatively impact performance and the relaxation – the opposite of distress allows students to access what they have learned.

**Activities:** Review and practice relaxation and refocusing techniques. Practice Guided imagery exercise with the Magic Carpet.

Relaxation and Refocusing
Relaxation Routine

1. Muscle tensing & relaxing – Stress gives energy (adrenaline) to the muscles. It is important to release that energy in a positive way so it doesn’t need to be released in a negative way. Isolate each set of muscles in the body beginning with the toes. Begin the process by tensing (squeezing) that muscle for a 5 count, then relax the muscle for a 5 count. Continue this process throughout the entire body. Physical exercise like Yoga can also be used.

2. Deep, focused breathing – Our body needs oxygen to function. Taking in deep, controlled breaths allows us to focus our breathing to help our brains think, our heart beat at a reasonable pace and our muscles respond to the relaxation routine.

3. Positive thinking – Our body and minds are intricately connected. Our thinking can increase our stress and tension level and vice versa. By the same token, our thinking can relax our minds and body, helping us to focus on more productive behaviors. Think of a positive thought or place. Describe it to yourself using your 5 senses.

Strategies for Relaxation and Refocusing

Step 1

- Begin Relaxation Routine.
- Muscle tensing & relaxing
- Deep breathing
- Positive thinking

Step 2  Focus on an activity in the coping skill box that you enjoy to relax and refocus you (about 5 minutes).
Examples of activities you enjoy

**Step 3** Use your strengths to accomplish task or motivate you to finish things you like less.

Examples of strengths

**Step 4** Remind yourself that you can complete a task requested of you. If you become upset or stressed while working on the task start the process over. You will get better and better at relaxing and refocusing with practice!

**Step 5** Reward yourself for completing the task.

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**Module 5: Interpersonal Effectiveness**

**Goal:** To understand that effectively managing emotional relationships and communicating effectively with peers and family allows you to keep personal lives in compartments separate from school work and MCAS tests.

**Activities:** See GIVE Exercise from DBT manual

G Be gentle in your approach to a person and a situation. Effectively dealing with a peer or family member means no attacks, no threats and no judging.

I Act interested, listen and pay attention when communicating.

V Validate or acknowledge how someone feels and what they are expressing to you.

E Use an easy manner. Use humor, smile. These efforts go a long way in creating effective communication with others.

Exercise: Create a timeline of your life birth (what has already occurred) until death (what will occur in the future). Add in additional layers such as people you will come in contact with. Feelings you will have. Relationship situations that will occur.

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**Module 6: Attention, Focus and Self Esteem**

**Goal:** To understand that many life issues and events impact our ability to focus and pay attention which in turn impacts our self esteem.

**Activities:** Islands of success discussion and exercise.

**Resiliency Builders:**

- Relationships
- Humor
- Inner Direction
- Perceptiveness
- Independence
Module 7: Stress Tolerance and Self Soothing

**Goal:** To understand that success is greatly influenced by stress and perceptions of stress. Learning to use stress to motivate and self-soothe in times of non-beneficial stress is essential to doing well on MCAS.

**Activities:** Discuss eustress situations and practice creating coping skill boxes and describing relaxing places using the 5 senses.

Sources of stress:
- Home/personal
- Death/illness of parent, sibling or grandparent
- Divorce/Remarriage
- Financial/Loss of employment
- Birth of sibling
- Childcare/Supervision while parent(s) work
- Academic
- Grades/MCAS
- Transitions
- Teacher attitude, mannerisms, personality
- Peer
- Social rejection
- Appearance
- Public exposure
- Competition

NOTES TO SELF
Module 8: Humor

Goal: To understand the benefits of humor in education, test taking and success.
Activities: Jokes and mood monitoring. Sometimes it just improves your perspective!

Module 9 and 10: Conflict Resolution

Goal: To understand the impact that conflict can have on success. Adolescents experience a great deal of their lives through peer relationships. Conflict and bullying negatively impact success.
Activities: Discussion of bullying and peer relationships. Completing conflict resolution exercises.

Exercise 1: Who gets the $100 bill? The group engages in a dialog to decide if they were given one hundred dollar bill that could not be divided who would get to go home with it. Group should note what process takes place to decide, what it felt like, and how it was decided (ie. Was there threats, manipulation, coercion, agreement, concessions, etc.)

Exercise 2: The group is to imagine that they live in Town A. Their homes are scattered around town on streets 1, 2,3, etc. to equal the number of students in the group. As well, they must arrange for the following in town: dump, sewage treatment plant, prison, arcade and swimming pool. The group needs to place these on the streets where the homes are located and cannot add streets. Observation and discussion of the process to decide should take place after the activity.

Exercise 3: Complete the definition of conflict sheet. What comes to mind when you hear the word conflict, add circles if needed.
The Cast of Characters

The Aggressor

The Target

The Bystander
The Motivators

Why Do People Act That Way?

Targets are usually motivated by:
-- Fear of Payback
-- Fear of Not Being Believed
-- Fear of Exclusion

TARGETS LACK
POWER AND CONTROL

The Motivators

Why Do People Act That Way?

Bystanders are usually motivated by:
-- Fear of Payback
-- Fear of Exclusion
-- Indecision – What Should I Do?

BYSTANDERS CAN EITHER
LACK OR SEEK POWER AND
CONTROL