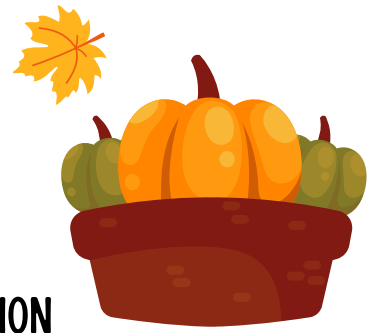




October



COUNSELOR'S CORNER NEWSLETTER

THEME OF THE MONTH: SELF MANAGEMENT AND REGULATION



BRAIN SCIENCE:

THE TEEN BRAIN IN MOTION

Adolescence is a period of profound neurological remodeling. The **prefrontal cortex**—the area of the brain responsible for impulse control, long-term planning, and emotional regulation—is still developing well into a person's twenties. Meanwhile, the **amygdala**, which drives emotional responses, is highly active. When a student feels overwhelmed by a looming deadline, a grading period, or a social conflict, their brain can default to a "fight, flight, or freeze" response. Teaching self-regulation is not about suppressing these emotions; it is about widening the gap between a stimulus and a student's response.



HOME CONNECTION:

Supporting self-management at home requires a shift from **managing your student** to **coaching your student**. Consider these adjustments to foster autonomy:

- **Move from Tracking to Inquiring:** Instead of logging into the grading portal daily and alerting them to an assignment, ask open-ended questions: "How are you feeling about your workload this week, and what is your plan for tackling it?"
- **Normalize the Pivot:** When a plan fails (e.g., they stayed up too late studying), avoid rescuing them immediately or lecturing. Let the natural consequence occur, then debrief: "Your plan didn't yield the result you wanted. What can we adjust in your routine for next time?"
- **Model Visible Regulation:** Let your teenagers see you manage your own stress. Vocalize your process: "I've had a highly stressful day at work, so I am going to take a 15-minute walk to clear my head before I start dinner."



STRATEGIES FOR THE STUDENT

1. Emotional Regulation: The "Shift" Technique

When academic or social stress peaks, students can use the S.T.O.P. method to break the cycle of overwhelm:

- **Stop:** Pause what you are doing.
- **Take a breath:** Deep breathing anchors the nervous system.
- **Observe:** Notice your thoughts and physiological sensations without judgment ("My chest feels tight, I am feeling anxious about this math test").
- **Proceed:** Move forward with a conscious choice rather than an emotional reaction.

2. Time Management: Managing the Independent Schedule

Independent school students frequently juggle rigorous schedules. True self-management involves realistic time assessment:

- **The 50/10 Rule:** Encourage students to study with intense focus for 50 minutes, followed by a mandatory 10-minute break away from screens to reset cognitive fatigue.
- **Energy Mapping:** Urge students to tackle their most challenging or complex assignments when their energy levels are highest, rather than leaving them for late at night.



HELPFUL LINKS:

[Child Mind Institute Guide on Co-Regulation](#)

[Child Mind Institute Self-Regulation Resource](#)

[Tools to Try Cards for Tweens & Teens via Social Thinking](#)

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