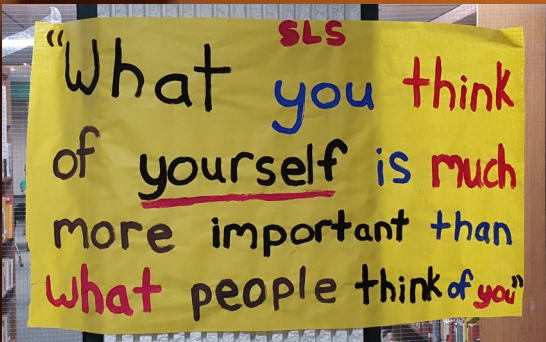
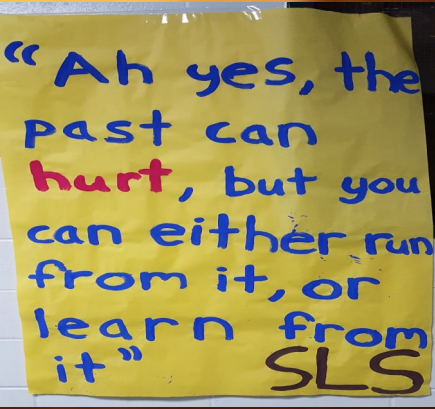
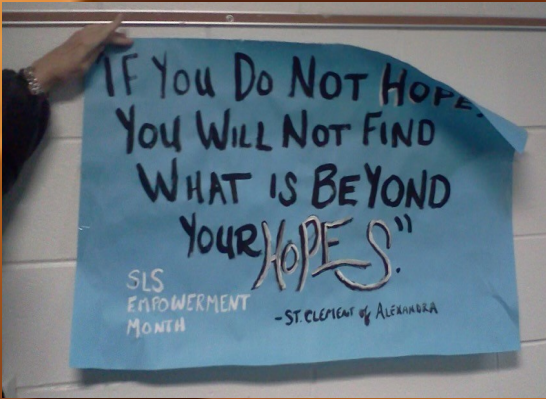


Our mental health is a fundamental aspect of our lives because it plays a crucial role in our perceptions of various scenarios and influences our decision-making. It is critical to pay close attention to the state of our mental health because it can drastically impact the direction we head in, both physically and psychologically. Indicators of poor mental health vary between individuals but symptoms that are most pervasive are negative self-talk, exhaustion, and self-isolation. Often we are disconnected from what may be occurring in our bodies and sometimes, our minds. Though it can be an overwhelming experience, it is important to tune in to your physical and emotional well-being to gauge your mental state. You owe it to yourself to perform a self-evaluation and truly ask yourself, how are you feeling?

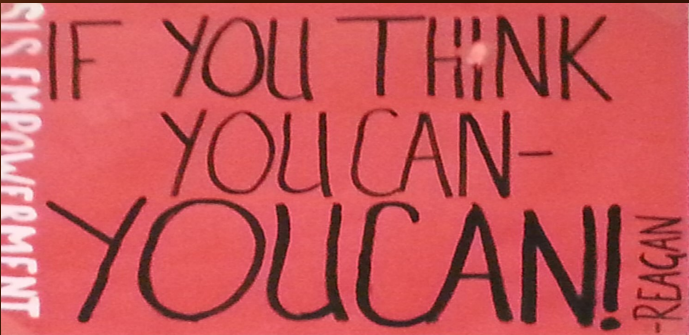
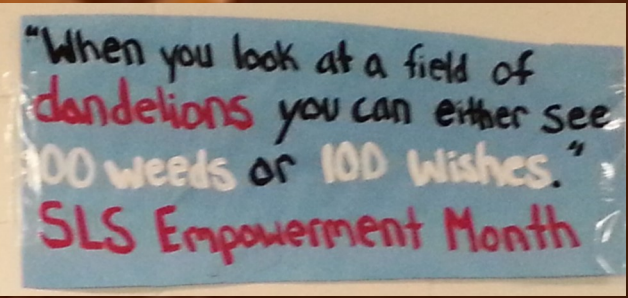
With this in mind, our society is guilty of painting strength as a measure of how much physical or emotional pain we can endure. However, I have a vastly different viewpoint surrounding that. Strength, in my eyes, is acknowledging when you are not okay and actively seeking out assistance for the issues plaguing you. Collectively, we have been socialized to believe that having discourse surrounding our mental health struggles is burdening or improper. When in actuality, speaking up about your difficulties when it comes to mental health is one of the bravest decisions anyone could make compared to placating the discomfort of other people. If you are struggling with your mental health, the most loving decision you could perform on your behalf is to reach out to those who can assist you.

Given these points, it is understandable to still be hesitant about voicing the state your mental health may be in. Naturally, not everyone feels comfortable or emotionally safe enough to have this discussion with the people in their lives. At the end of the day, you are deserving of happiness even if the possibility of it seems fleeting. If you have no one in your life to reach out to or are willing to extend a helping hand to you, try to be that person for yourself. You deserve to have someone in your corner and if no one else is cheering you on, who better else to do that than you?

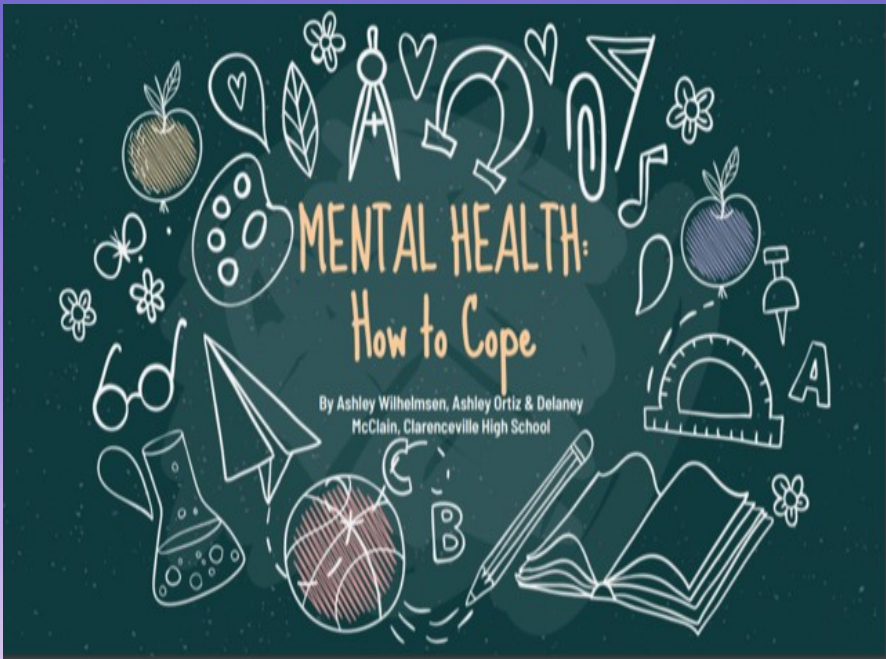
Students Set the Tone



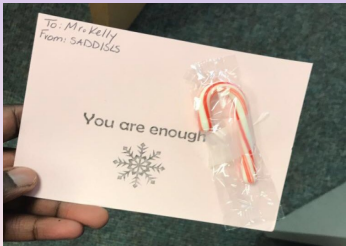
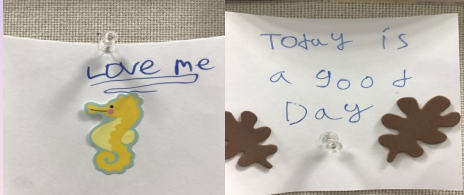
Freeland SLS Inspiration



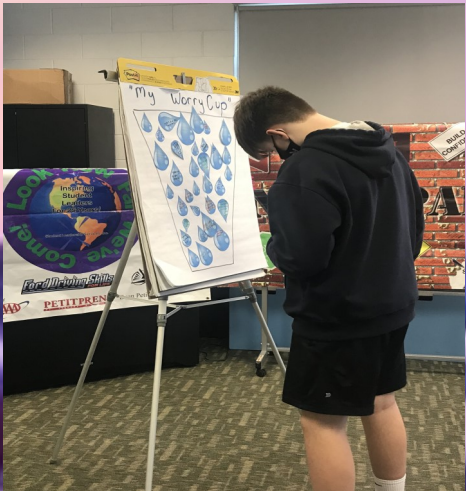




Below: SLS & Boys and Girls Club Troy words of encouragement.



Above: Clarenceville High School Mental Health Project - Every student and staff member in the school received one of these encouraging cards.



Above: A lesson on middle school anxiety and anger. Students listed their worries on water droplet sticky notes in the “Worries Cup.” Some examples are talking, singing, and playing sports in front of people, as well as test taking. SLS training Boys and Girls Club Troy



**A Note From the Editor, Allison**

One way to positively impact mental health is to spend some time with animals and, science aside, it’s hard not to smile around fur babies. If you are having a tough day, take your dog on a walk, cuddle with your cat, or spend time with a friend’s pet if you don’t have one. You can also try including animals in an activity with your chapter! Some fun, drug-free activities are going to a zoo or aquarium, participating in a pet adoption event, volunteering at a local animal shelter, goat yoga, and horseback riding. Oftentimes, these activities will bring you outside to enjoy the sunshine as well as getting your body moving. Exercise and enjoying nature provide plenty of health benefits themselves, however, animals create special friendships and joyful memories that can bring a smile to your face when times are tough.

From top to bottom: Thai and Chai, Winnie, and Adrian

**Mental Health Care for Self and Others**

Excerpt from the booklet *You Are Not Alone: Helping and Coping with Mental Health Challenges* by Arabella Glass, Mason Middle School, Edited by Marcia Partin and Allison McCauley.

**Self-care activities:**

You can do self-care activities even if you are not currently struggling with mental health because anyone can do them, and they are good things to start doing all the time. Give yourself affirmations to motivate you!

- Polish your nails – do something that makes you feel special!
- Create a routine to follow - it doesn’t matter what kind of routine it is, it could be a chore or just a morning routine.
- Exercise more often, such as, you could go on a bike ride or take a walk.
- Read a book or start a journal.
- Build something. Paint your room. Plant a garden. Design a mural.

**Helping Others:**

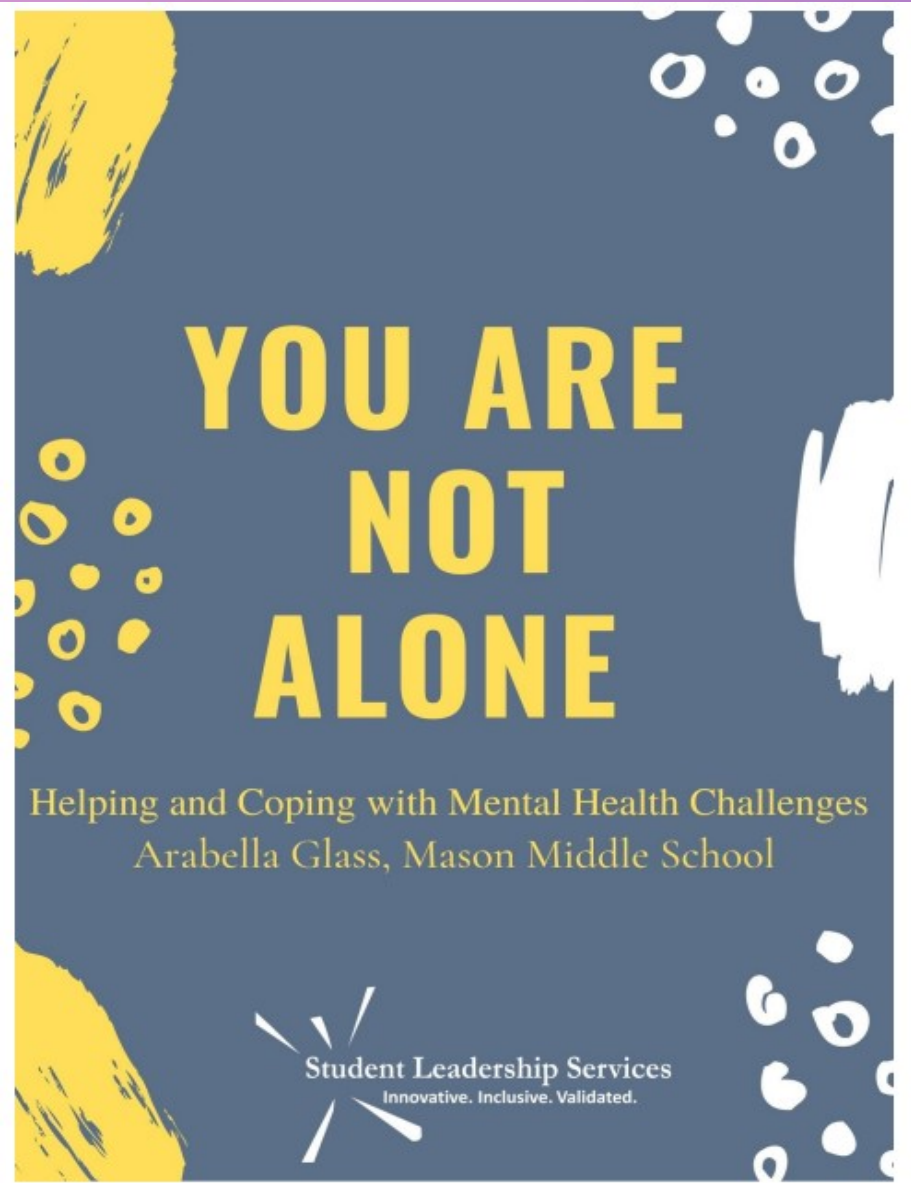
If you want to help someone there are other things you can do...In fact, there are many things that YOU can do to help.

- Provide them a resource. You could use the resources from this book or find your own.
- Listen to them and be understanding about what they are going through.
- Dedicate some time to spend with them, whether it is a zoom call or doing some self-care activities together. Try to make them forget about their stress and have fun with them!
- Recommend some ways to cope and stay calm and reassure them.
- Be kind or check in on them. Be there for them and make them feel worthy, plus you can make them laugh - who doesn’t like to laugh!

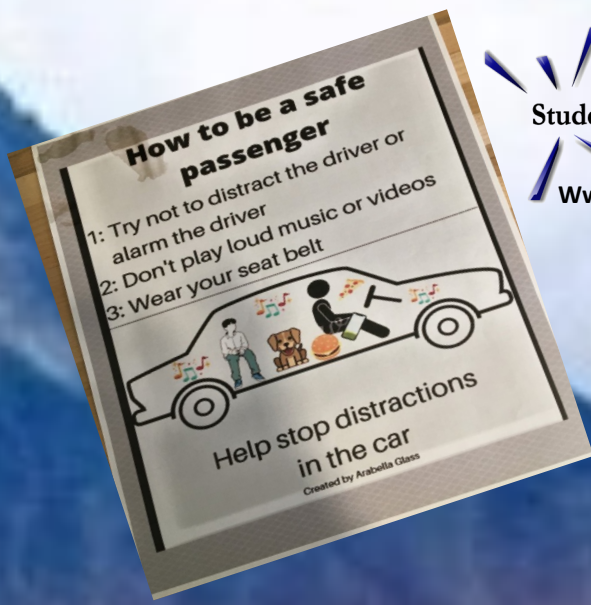
This book has helped to show you how to help anyone if they are struggling, so remember the advice from this book so you can help others.

**Resources:** Get your free copy of this booklet. Call 248-706-0757 or dmf@SLSToday.org.

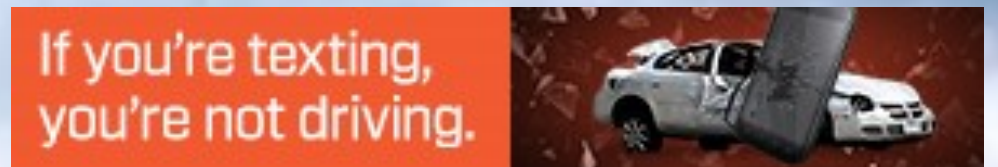
- [www.youngwomenshealth.org](http://www.youngwomenshealth.org)
- [www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/young-people](http://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/young-people)
- <https://www.oakgov.com/covid/best-practices/mental-health>







**U Drive. U Text. U Pay. Always, #JustDrive**



**#DidYouKnow: 9% of drivers 15 to 19 years old involved in 2019 fatal crashes were reported as distracted. NHTSA**

## THE INTERSECTION OF TEEN SAFE DRIVING AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Students learn Self-management Skills by observing how others model behaviors, positive or negative...now on social media every minute. SLS uses positive peer influence with youth by looking at the bigger picture, preparation and practice of skills, learning consequences of choices, and how to keep their brain engaged while operating a car. Students learn Impulse Control in SLS from other students, as well as adults and experts.

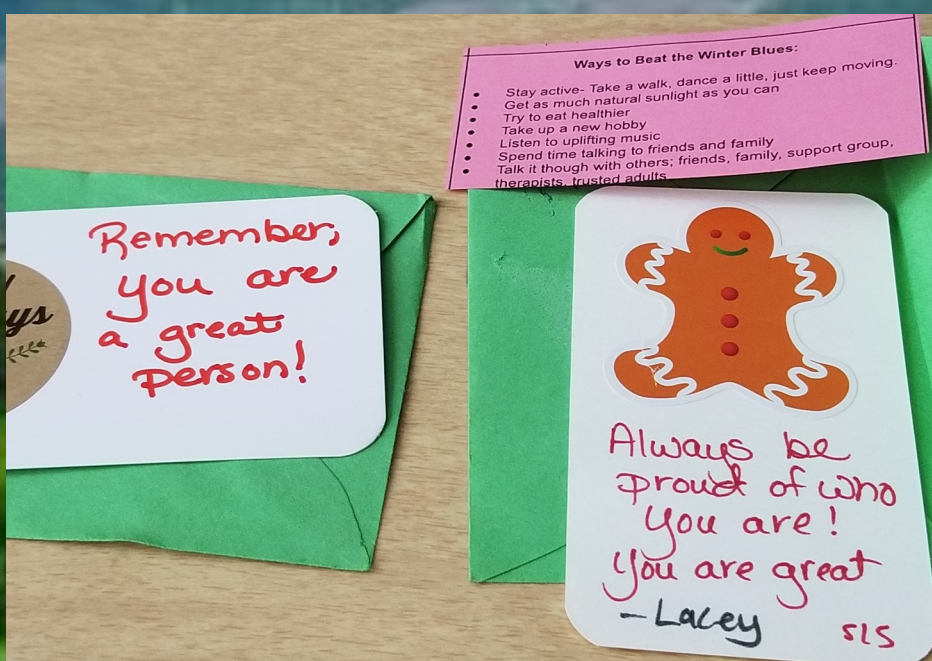
Decision Making Skills—turning on anything in the car, accepting a phone call, reading street signs, traffic shifts, and GPS nav, interferes with attention while driving. Enforcing passenger behavior safety rules is challenging, not fun.

Resistance Skills are needed to decide not to overpack a car and block vision with people or sports equipment; speeding because you are late for something, such as school and you have too many tardies; your Mom is waiting for you.

Alcohol and other drugs are lethal for drivers or passengers— Zero Tolerance.

Anger Management Skills can prepare a student driver to avoid tailgating, speeding, road rage, and showing off behind the wheel; disagreements with friends; a bad grade.

Driving a car and mental health are inextricably connected for youth with few years/months of driving practice. That is why SLS incorporates Self-management Skills through activities, trainings, conferences, and events with interactive experiences and simulators to reinforce knowledge and practice. SLS students train their peers in elementary and middle school to be safe passengers and future drivers using practice, reinforcement, and leadership. We save lives.

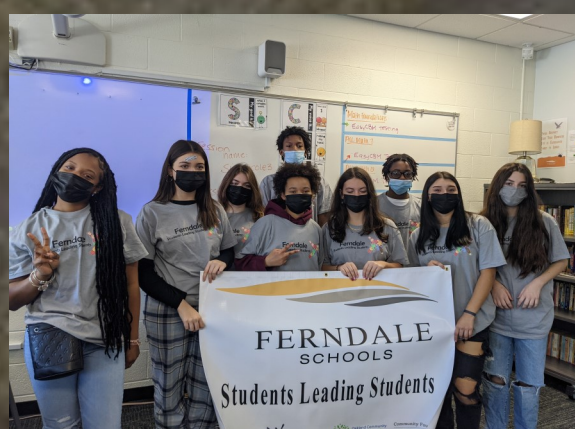


Atherton SLS spreads affirming mental health messages to create a support system within their school community. Every student and staff received these gifts! Wonderful! Advisor: Michelle Turner, alumna, former board member.

**Prom Ideas from SLStoday.org “Poster of Ideas”**  
**Public Service Announcements on safe driving;**  
**Message cards with prom flowers, centerpieces;**  
**Safety Belts painted on driveways/speed bumps;**  
**White ribbons; Fashion Show; Crashed car;**  
**Chain-of-Life; Hands Off Drugs wall; Prom Poem;**  
**Good reasons not to drink and drive;**  
**Prom discount if sign “Alcohol-free” Promise;**  
**Local business, community buildings display**  
**anti-drinking and driving signs; Billboards;**  
**Alcohol Awareness Month is April; Message in**  
**Spring musical program; Fliers on cars in school**  
**parking lot.**



**Middle School SLS LifeSkills at Boys and Girls Club Troy learning leadership, decision making, cooperation, confidence, and assertiveness in interactive activities . Very fun group led by SLS Intern, Jillian Davis.**



**Ferndale Middle School SLS Chapter modeling behavior change: Respect for others, courtesy in the hallways. Great Idea! Advisor, Mrs. Kelly**



