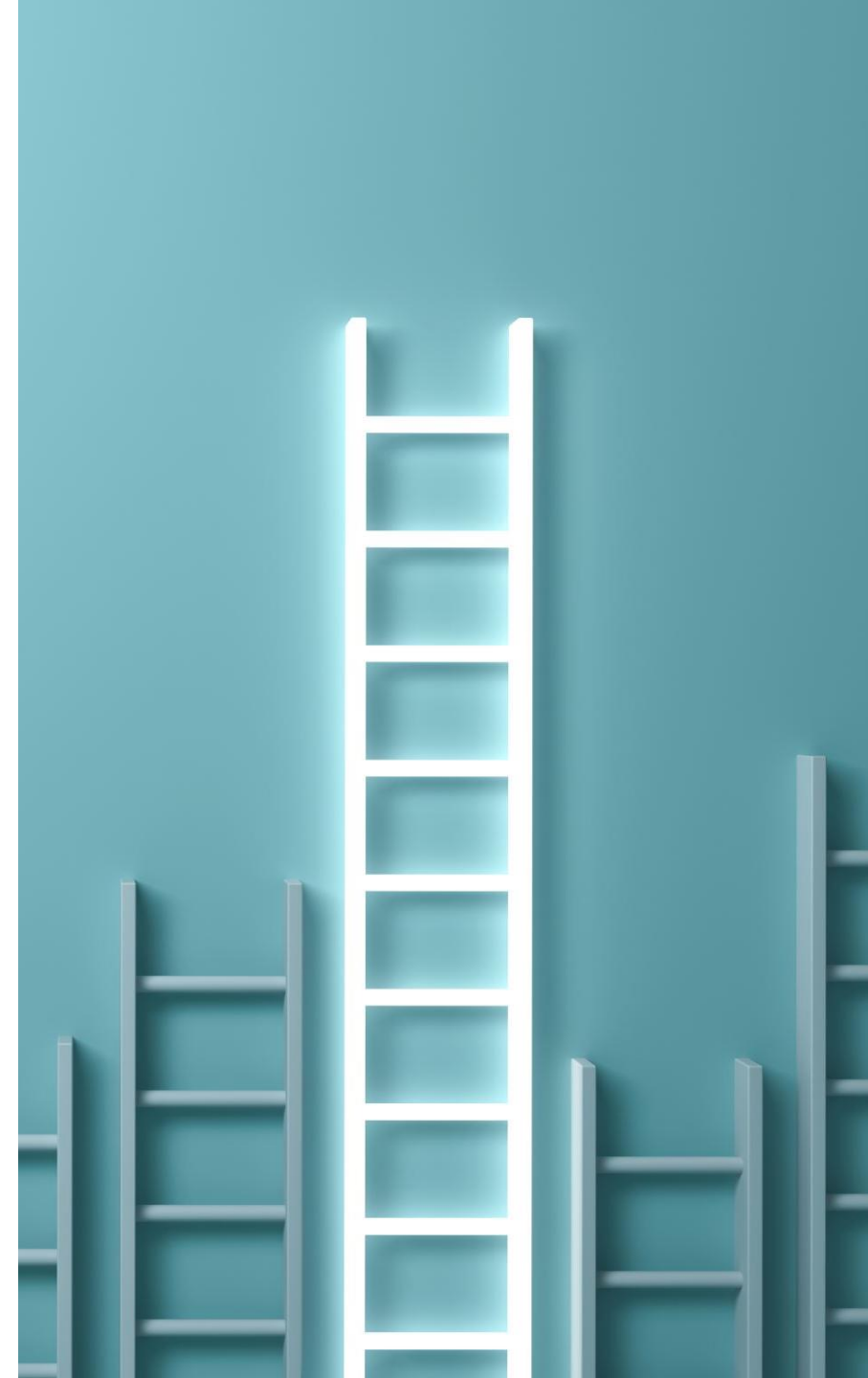


INCREASING MOTIVATION

STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

DR. THOMAS KELLY
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST
SYOSSET HIGH SCHOOL



THE PRESENTER

- School Psychologist
- Multi- Disciplinary Team Member

WHY THIS TOPIC?

- Positive Psychology- growing field of scientific study that focuses on what makes life most worth living, focusing on well-being and individual traits that lead to improved quality of life.
 - The overarching question- how do we achieve success?
 - Grit- passion and perseverance towards long-term goals
 - Motivation- how we get started?

*WHEN DO WE, THE
SCHOOL TEAM, HEAR
ABOUT MOTIVATION?*

A LACK OF MOTIVATION

- Less enthusiasm about school attendance?
- Stopped completing homework?
- Stopped attempting homework?
- The quality of work has diminished?
- Grades have decreased since the start of the school year?
- Increased confrontation when the topic of work arises?

WHAT IS MOTIVATION?

1. Intrinsic Motivation- desire to enact behaviors for the pleasure, satisfaction, or excitement associated with the behavior itself.
2. Extrinsic Motivation- when individuals are driven to achieve outcomes separable from the satisfaction inherent in the behavior itself.
3. Amotivation- a state in which neither intrinsic nor extrinsic factors energize action.

EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

- Completing work on a project your boss has requested.
- Running in a race in order to place and receive a trophy.
- Returning to the same retail store because you have points to use.
- Cleaning your home because you do not want guests to think you're messy.
- Posting your location on social media for followers to see.

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

- Staying after hours at work to continue a project you enjoy.
- Engaging in physical exercise for the positivity of the experience.
- Cleaning because you appreciate the feeling of a clean-living environment.
- Practicing Mindfulness.

MOTIVATION

- You can experience motivation towards an infinite number of goals or outcomes...
 - Academic
 - Social
 - Career
 - Physical Health
 - Mental Health

WHICH TYPE OF MOTIVATION DO WE WANT TO INCREASE?

- Why aim to increase extrinsic motivation? Should we not focus on intrinsic motivation?
- These questions misconstrue motivation and what the science of motivation tells us.

WHICH TYPE OF MOTIVATION DO WE WANT TO INCREASE?



THE 'AMOTIVATED' STUDENT

- Slept in class
- Inattentive
- Kicked out of Spanish class
- Not working to potential





INCREASING MOTIVATION

Strategies for Parents concerned with School Motivation

STEP 1: DEFINE THE PROBLEM

- Begin with a close look at what the student is doing—or not doing.
- What are the *specific behaviors* that you are observing or not observing?
 - Class Attendance?
 - Studying? Re-reading notes, reviewing past exams, flash cards?
 - Preparing? Planning, Organizing, Prioritizing?
- What behaviors, if observed, would lead you to believe the student is motivated?
 - What frequency of the behavior would justify that conclusion?
 - What duration of the behavior would justify that conclusion?

NORMATIVE?

- When defining the problem, it is important to consider whether the observed behavior is normative, or typical and expected given the student's developmental level.
 - Ex. A child first learning multiplication may not be motivated to complete their math facts.
 - Ex. A middle school student that is expected to now be independent, may not be motivated to initiate their HW.
 - Ex. A HS Junior may not be motivated to begin their college essay because they do not know where to begin.

STEP 2: CLARIFY THE EXPECTATIONS

- Given the student's age and developmental level, what are the expected behaviors that you would like to observe?
- Communicate expectations.
 - Hold a discussion about motivation at an opportune time.
 - *Do not* hold a conversation about motivation when you are observing (and most concerned/frustrated) a lack of motivation.
- Begin with, "I would understand that you are motivated when I see you..."

“I’M BORED”

- During discussions of motivation, a common student response emerges, “I am bored!”
- Again, ensure that boredom is defined and understood.
- Sometimes students who are challenged or frustrated aren’t sure what to call their emotional experience.
 - Could their boredom be worries or fears?
 - Could their boredom demonstrate a skill deficit?

WHEN DISCUSSING EXPECTATIONS: CONVEY INTEREST!

- Younger students tend to be excited about what it is that their parents are excited about. Excitement can be contagious.
- Plan what vocabulary you will be using ahead of your discussion. Make it fun!

- Teenagers may become defensive if they are asked too many questions. Hold a goal of maintaining a conversation and not an interrogation.
- With older students, it is important to weigh the health of the relationship with the goal of discussing motivation.
- Focus the conversation on the positive effects of increased motivation.

STEP 3: CONNECTION TO GOALS

- After you have clarified your expectations, move towards a connection to the goals.
- What is the student's goal?
 - Mastery or Performance Goals
 - Comparison Goals
- Where are they going and how are they getting there?

CONSIDER THEIR PLAN

- Student Strengths, Preferences, Interests
- The student's preferences and interests, as they relate to transition from school to post-school activities.

GOALS

- For older students who have developed an understanding of delayed gratification, sometimes simple reminders of their long-term goals can help push them.
- Other times, a connection to short-term goals can be more effective.
- For some, College, Employment and “The Future” can be too distal to amount in behavior change.
- Linking specific behaviors with the student’s long-term goals can make the work feel more personally fulfilling.

STEP 4: REINFORCEMENT

- First consider, when are *you* most motivated?
 - Is there a reward that prompts your behavior?
 - Do you look forward to the reward?
 - Could you do without the reward?
 - Would you do without the reward?
 - Is there something you prefer over the reward?
- Ex. Motivation to attend the gym.

WHAT TO REWARD

- The message you likely want to send is that you respect and value the student's hard work.
- Praising students for following through when things get difficult, for making a sustained effort, for trying things they're not sure they can do successfully, can all help teach them the pleasure of pushing themselves.
- Praise for good grades that come easily can make kids feel they shouldn't have to exert themselves.

WHAT IS REWARDING



TYPES OF REWARDS

- Again, rewards need not be tangible!
- Younger students, especially, respond very well to social reinforcers like praise, hugs, or high fives.
- Observe naturally occurring rewards and plan for their strategic implementation.

READILY ACCESSIBLE REWARDS

- What is the student doing when not engaging in the desired behaviors?
- How does the student spend their free time?
- What are the student's areas of interest?
- What does the student enjoy discussing?
- When do the non-confrontational conversations occur? What precipitates it?

STEP 4: MONITOR PROGRESS

- Recall: What behaviors, if observed, would lead you to believe the student is motivated?
 - What frequency of the behavior would justify that conclusion?
 - What duration of the behavior would justify that conclusion?
- After implementing rewards, does the behavior increase? Is the behavior trending in the right direction?
- Monitor the progress and continue the conversation, especially when observing success!

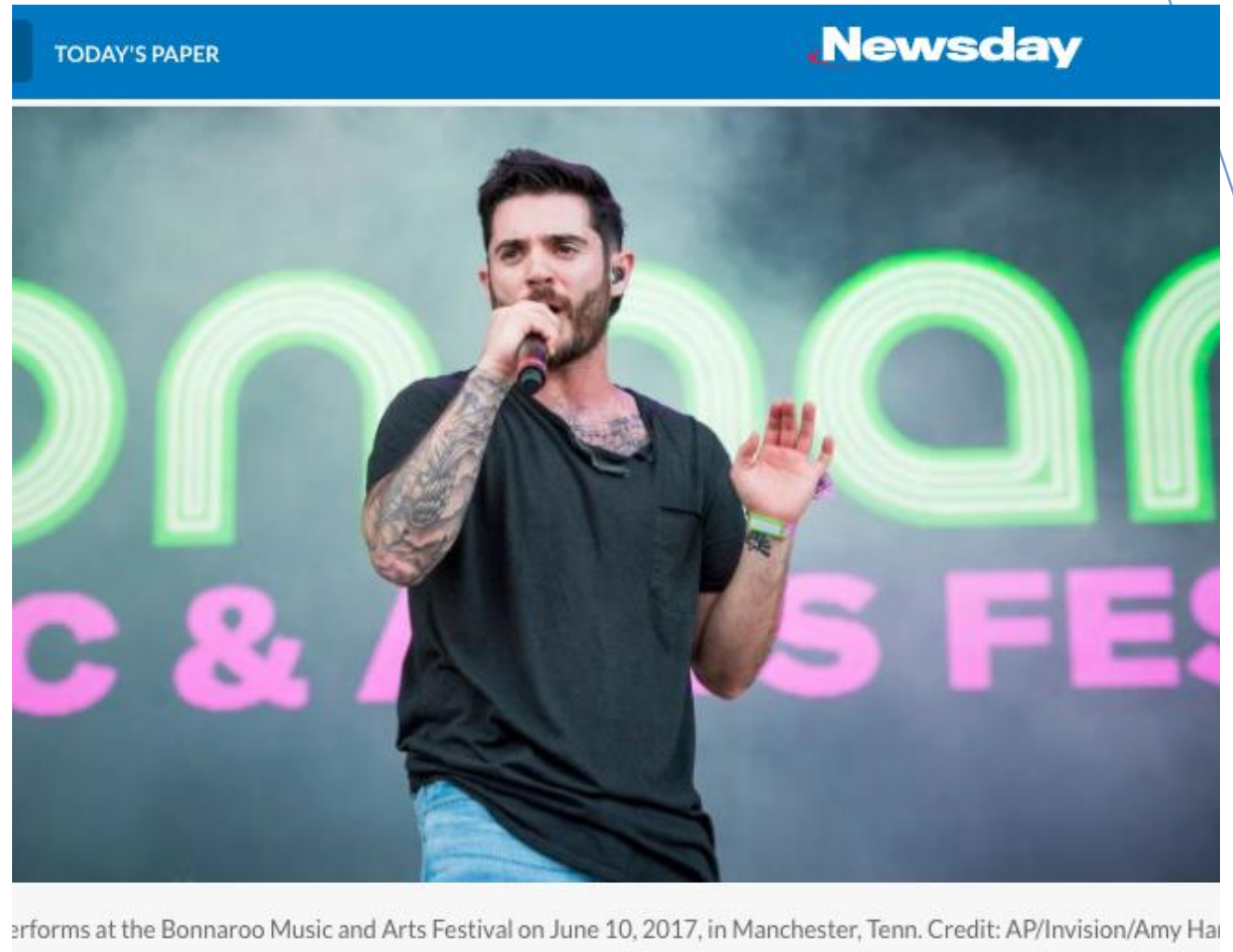
ALLOW MISTAKES

- We understand that perfection is not attainable.
- While students need encouragement and it's healthy to push them to try their best, we know that setbacks are natural aspect of child development.
- Frame setbacks as learning experiences and teachable moments.
- **Sometimes an important way that a student learns to properly prepare for school is by finding out what happens when they're unprepared.**



*THE 'AMOTIVATED'
STUDENT*

- Grammy nominated recording artist.
- Slept in class because he stayed up each night creating music.
 - *Short term goal!*
- Inattentive because he was preoccupied with his craft.
 - *Area of strength and interest!*
- Not working to his potential?



performs at the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival on June 10, 2017, in Manchester, Tenn. Credit: AP/Invision/Amy Ha



INCREASING MOTIVATION

Strategies for Students concerned with their School Motivation

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR STUDENTS

- When it comes to gaining motivation for academic tasks...
 - Begin where success is most likely! Start with a task that is least challenging.
 - Write down your goals. Both long and short term. Where would you like to go!
 - When it comes to learning, it is okay to get stuck! In fact, getting stuck is helpful!
 - We then know what we do not know.
 - We can ask more informed questions.
 - It shows us where we need to study.
 - Our memory is actually strengthened when we get stuck.

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR STUDENTS

- Partner with your teachers! Your teachers want to see you succeed. Help them to understand your experience and listen to their insight.

THANK YOU!!!