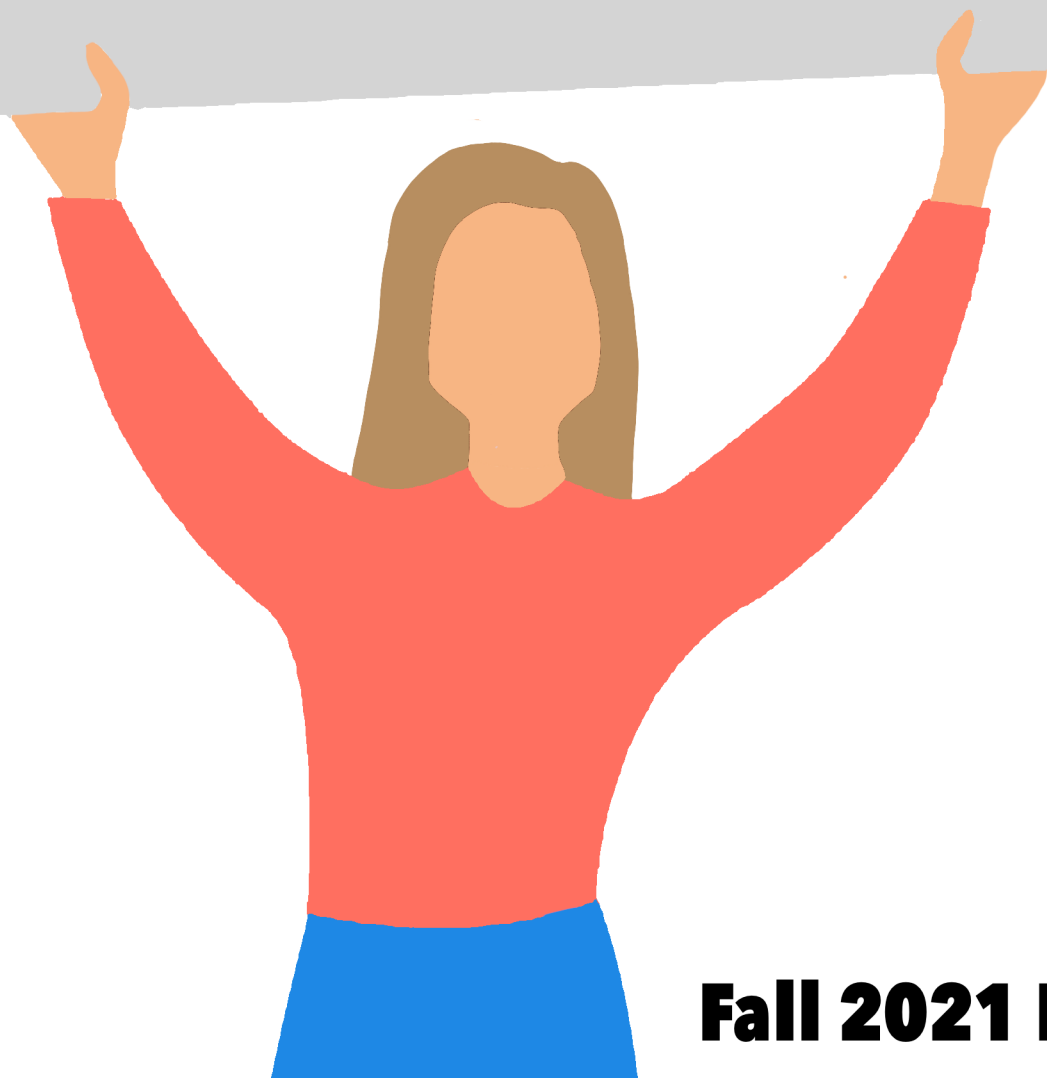


Lincoln East Oracle

**EVERYTHING
IS FINE**



Fall 2021 Edition

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

LETTER FROM THE STAFF

by: the oracle staff

14

THE EFFECTS OF ISOLATION

by: anika keese

5

PERSONALITY: AN INSIGHT INTO WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE BEHAVE

by: jada vogel

17

HAS SOCIAL MEDIA HELPED OR HURT US?

by: cady blackstock

7

REDEFINING THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

by: izzy apel

19

QUARANTINE CHANGED TEENAGE POLITICS

by: brisa odenthal

9

HIGH SCHOOL NEW NORMAL

by: carly jones

21

TEACHERS ARE HUMAN TOO

by: hailey anderson

11

SOCIAL BATTERY

by: kamryn snyder



23

RELIGION AND IDENTITY

by: elliot grant

36

FEAR AND HOW IT AFFECTS US

by: devon beechley

25

DOWNFALL OF AP PANDEMIC GRADES

by: sabrina benford

39

SUPPLY CHAIN SHORTAGE

by: kylie brown

27

ITS OKAY TO NOT BE OKAY

by: emery erikson

41

SILVER LININGS: THE GOOD TO COME FROM THE PANDEMIC

by: jacob bundy

29

ITS OKAY TAKE A BREAK

by: peyton svehla

31

ARE OUR PANDEMIC COPING SKILLS STILL HURTING US?

by: ava bartels

33

READ THESE LIPS

by: hope shortridge



LETTER FROM THE STAFF

Dear Reader,

Although the title may be deceiving, we as The Oracle staff realize that everything is in fact not fine. Covid-19 has led to detrimental effects economically, socially, and mentally. However, despite these challenges and seemingly impossible circumstances, expectations appear to be shifting back to life as normal. Students are expected to juggle academics along with athletics, jobs, clubs, and other extracurriculars. Life appears to be back in full swing, hitting some harder than others.


Despite this, we realize that life is not the same. Loved ones have been lost, mental health has suffered, finances have been put under stress, and countless other consequences. And so, how are we supposed to cope in order to keep up with relentless expectations? As shocking as it may sound, there is no simple answer.

We as humans are adaptable, resilient, and ever changing. In a matter of one week during March of 2020, routines were flipped upside down, our daily environment changed, and our way of existence shifted. While it's important to realize the incredible amount of adaptation we had to endure in a short amount of time, this isn't to say it was easy. This time has been physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting without mercy. Despite these circumstances, we have learned vital coping skills, the importance of family, and to prioritize mental health.


In this edition you will see several articles addressing mental health struggles, coping strategies, and the effects of isolation. We as a staff understand that some of the issues we are bringing to light have been a source of struggle long before the pandemic. High schoolers often grapple with various mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, stress, all whilst trying to define their dynamic identities. Adding a global pandemic to the mix simply didn't do anyone any favors.

Our goal as a staff is to help our readers understand that they are not alone despite such lonely circumstances. We acknowledge that in a society that is designed to make us fearful of taking our foot off the gas pedal, it's ok to take a break. In a culture that values individualism, self-reliance, and sees asking for help as a burden, we discern that being resourceful is a sign of emotional strength rather than weakness. Human nature is both independent and dependent, and in order to be capable of dealing with our own feelings, we must lean on others when we genuinely need help.

SINCERELY,
THE ORACLE STAFF



"ALL THE TEARS
IN THE WORLD
CAN'T BRING
BACK THE DEAD
OR WASH AWAY
YOUR FEARS AND GRIEF. I WANT YOU TO
PUT UP YOUR CHIN AND TELL YOURSELF
YOU ARE *strong*. AND IF YOU BEGIN TO
weaken, HOLD ON TO ME.



*That's what
I am here
for."*

-CYNTHIA WRIGHT

PERSONALITY: AN INSIGHT INTO WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE BEHAVE

JADA VOGEL, STAFF WRITER

Personality can be defined in many ways: the way we behave, the decisions we make, or how we present ourselves to others. We all have a different personality and there is not one set personality that we can conform to. Whether you lean more to the side of an introvert or extrovert or somewhere in between, it is important to understand your personality and how it can affect your everyday life.

According to the article, “What is Personality?”, written by Kendra Cherry, the word personality “stems from the Latin word persona, which refers to a theatrical mask worn by performers in order to either project different roles or disguise their identities.” The word personality has a set definition, just like any other word that appears in the dictionary. It is also a word that can be interpreted in different ways depending on a person’s knowledge and experience.

Julie Mikranz, a Clinical Psychologist here in Lincoln, describes personality as, “many different traits that make up unique individuals.”

We all have a different personality and that is one of the many things that make us unique. Our personality doesn’t conform to a set definition, it is defined by our unique traits that make us who we are. Sometimes personality is described by or organized into types, but many psychologists rather focus on personality traits.

In the article “Personality Traits and Personality Types: What is Personality?”, Stephanie Pappas says, “each trait occurs along a spectrum and traits are independent of one another, making for an infinite constellation of human personality.”

One test that is used to help people find where they land on the scales of certain traits, is The Big Five. It was developed in the 1970’s and has the most research

backing it up. The Big Five can be easily remembered by the mnemonic OCEAN, or even CANOE works too.

O

Stands for openness. People with high openness typically enjoy adventure, are curious, have a wild imagination, and are open to new experiences. In contrast, people with low openness prefer to stick to their habits, aren’t the most adventurous, and probably don’t actively seek new experiences.

C

Which stands for conscientiousness. People who display a high level of conscientiousness are organized and dependable. They are disciplined and are achievement focused or goal driven. They are also planners. On the other end, individuals who are low in conscientiousness are characterized by a more spontaneous or freewheeling attitude. Conscientiousness is also related to achievement in school or in the workforce.



E

For extraversion, is the next trait, and is probably the most recognizable. If someone is more extroverted they are more of a social butterfly. They may be characterized by being chatty, sociable, and may draw their energy from a big group of people rather than one on one interactions. Introversion is on the other side of the spectrum of extraversion. Introverts need alone time to recharge. It may be confused with shyness, which implies fear, but introverts aren't necessarily scared of social interaction, they just need more time to recharge after an extended period around a big group.

A

Stands for agreeableness. This measures a person's warmth and kindness towards others. If someone is more agreeable they are trusting, helpful, and more compassionate. The opposite, a more disagreeable person, is on the cold and suspicious side.

N

For neuroticism is the last of the Big FIVE. In the article Pappas says, "To understand neuroticism, look no further than George Costanza of the long-running sitcom 'Seinfeld.'" People with high neuroticism are worriers and may have anxiety or depression. It also may be easier for them to fall into a depression.

With this information about The Big Five, you may have a better idea of where you land on the scale of each trait. Knowing your personality is a big step in figuring out who you are and how you best relate to situations. One thing we have to be careful of is not allowing ourselves to conform to a certain personality. It can help us understand ourselves better, but if used in a negative way, to conform yourself to a certain personality, it could potentially be harmful.

"Depending on how you use the information, if you're able to use it to help you know how best you're able to prepare for things or do things, or where you might need to make changes, then I think that information can be helpful as long as you don't use it as, like a hard and fast, this is just how I am, there's nothing I can do," Mikranz said.

We do have to remember that personality is not a set in stone thing in the long run. More than likely our personality will change as we grow and experience new things.

"It may even be possible to deliberately change aspects of one's own personality by making a repeated effort to behave differently," according to PsychologyToday.com.

Personality is impossible to conform to certain criteria, and it can be described through a spectrum of traits, different types, and many other ways that describe how a person behaves, their strengths, weaknesses, and how they respond to their environment. Personality is very broad, so remember to not conform yourself to a certain type or trait. It is a tool to help you determine a career, how you behave in an environment, and understand yourself a little better. •

REDEFINING THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

IZZY APEL, STAFF WRITER

What is the “typical” highschool experience? We all have expectations of what life is like beyond eighth grade. These preconceived ideas come from movies, our parents, and even undiscovered anticipation. Before we walk through the doors as a freshman we are full of unknowns. By the time we walk across the stage to accept our diploma, we can reflect on all the moments we’ve had in this place that has become our second home. The hard truth is that current students’ expectations of high school have currently been broken. We are not having the “normal” experience and unfortunately, we likely never will.

Those in high school now have faced one of the oddest times, one that will go down in history. We are living through high school in a pandemic. Abby Lewis, senior at East, is able to find the positive

in the situation.

“...I’ve experienced a lot of awesome moments,” Lewis shares. “I’d say in general, all the football games this year have been super fun. Just being a part of the student section is something super awesome. [And] last year, my junior year, I competed at state for swimming and I swam the 100 fly which was super awesome and I did really well. Also, I won homecoming queen this year so that was really cool. I didn’t expect it so it was super rewarding.”

Last year, activity attendance was limited and events like homecoming and pep rallies were canceled. Students were on a hybrid schedule and were only in the building half of the week. Teachers taught two different classes: one in zoom world and the other in the classroom. Both groups seemed oddly quiet. The excitement and energy that filled classrooms before was absent.

A staff member, Laura Gaulty, has been teaching at East for 12 years. She shares how she has seen a “change in morale” and attributes it 100% to the pandemic.

“Now coming back, I really feel like there’s an undercurrent of what we don’t know, we being the kiddos,” Gaulty states. “We don’t know exactly how to go to school anymore. I see that come across in confusion and I think sometimes that confusion leads to anger and acting out, more than I’ve ever seen.”



Promotional material for High School Musical movie made in 2006

Students and staff are exhausted. The morale is almost fake. Many are in survival mode. The morale at East has been tested time and time again as students and staff face fear, unknown, and change. Graulty describes the aftermath that Covid-19 has had on students' morale with the words "stress, anger, and drive." Some students are lost in their own shattered lives, and it is visible in the classroom. Our routines were disrupted due to the pandemic. Our world basically crumbled in a matter of days and now we are left with the wonder if it will return to what it was.

Fortunately, this year the student section has been filled once again. Big events like homecoming, booster blitz, and the pep rally all went off without major repercussions. Yet still, the "high school experience" has changed. Life is not normal, and people are going to struggle now more than ever as they are left to deal with the desired expectations of life before the pandemic. High schoolers' especially are left with the decision to redefine their expectations or continue on with the new normal.

On the bright side, many students have continued their lives without skipping a beat. The freshman and sophomore classes have a brief sense of what high school was before COVID. The junior and senior class had "regular high school" for a brief period, but their sense of normalcy has changed.

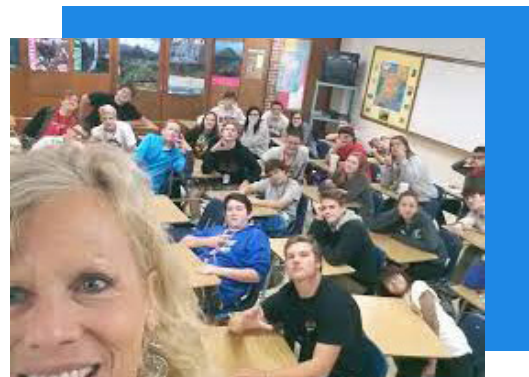
"...I'm in a lot of activities from the music department to sports," Lewis says. "I'm in NHS too so I feel like I've gotten the full experience of everything I want-

ed to get into just because I've been involved so heavily." Students are learning that there is no sole definition of a "high school experience." It is up to one's own interpretation. We design our own high school story through the activities we are involved in, who we surround ourselves with, and the way we create memories.

Throughout our lives, we face unending change. Life is unpredictable. It's time to accept that every aspect of our lives will likely not return to what it was before the pandemic. High school will not be the same, but instead it will evolve. Everything will be just fine. We need to accept and adapt, something that we have done our entire lives. Slowly our lives will piece back together and we will find new definitions to our routines. Let's be honest, at one time or another many of us envisioned high school like the High School Musical movie. Through redefining our expectations we can refabricate meaning to our lives. •



Senior Abby Lewis
Photo courtesy of Abby Lewis



Laura Graulty with her students
Photo courtesy of Laura Graulty

ACCEPT AND ADAPT

NEW NORMAL FOR HIGH SCHOOL

CARLY JONES, STAFF WRITER

When people say this is our “New Normal” do you know what that means? Especially for the students that just started high school, how do you even explain the high school “normal” to them?

The students that were freshman in the 2020–2021 school year never got to truly experience the normal freshman life or experience a fresh start to their high school years. At the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year all the booster lessons that East had talked about, were not about putting phones away or wearing IDs. They were about sanitizing the tables, how to wear masks correctly, and how to log on to zoom for classes. For students, the emphasis was not ‘Welcome to high school, let’s get you involved!’ It was to stay safe, and wear masks correctly.

Sylvia Kamradt is a sophomore at East High School. Last year Sylvia was enrolled in full-time Zoom but this year she is 100% in person.

“I was scared to come back. But now, it’s ok, I guess. It’s school,” Kamradt said. “I actually considered doing homeschool this year because of COVID.”

Many students have become increasingly riddled with anxiety throughout the past year. This was due to the constant isolation that people had to go through. With everything that has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

9



Many other important aspects of life have also changed. This includes the way East teachers were able to teach students. Teachers were more laid-back concerning grading and due dates because of the AB and full-time zoom students.

“Most of my grades were pretty high last year,” Kamradt said. “Because we were allowed to use notes on everything. They’re still decent, still A’s right now, but not as high.”

In addition, many clubs, extracurriculars, and sports were canceled during this time. Many people talk about going to their high school football games on Friday nights, but the new students didn’t get to experience that right away. Most student’s normal school events were cancelled due to COVID-19. Which affected many students in different ways since those clubs, extracurriculars, and sports may have been their only hobby that kept them socializing with different people.

“I haven’t been doing obviously normal stuff at school,” Kamradt said. “And I don’t do tennis lessons outside of school anymore because I don’t want to get sick, and you can’t really wear a mask with that.”

Trying to balance your school life and outside life can be challenging. Due to this many of the high school students (mainly, sophomores and freshmen) haven’t been able to develop the study habits they need to help them be successful in their classes yet. The students that were freshman last year had the most behavior referrals when compared to any other grade. I’m not blaming COVID-19 on students’ bad behavior, but many of them never had time to mature after their “2 days off” from school that turned into spending the rest of their 8th grade year at home.

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Mckenzie Potthoff is one of Lincoln East's seven counselors. "There's a lot of data out there that shows that they're [this year's 10th graders] struggling to follow the expectations and they have more behavior referrals and lower grades. Sixteen percent of today's sophomores failed one or more classes last year," Potthoff said. "So I mean, that's a pretty significant number."

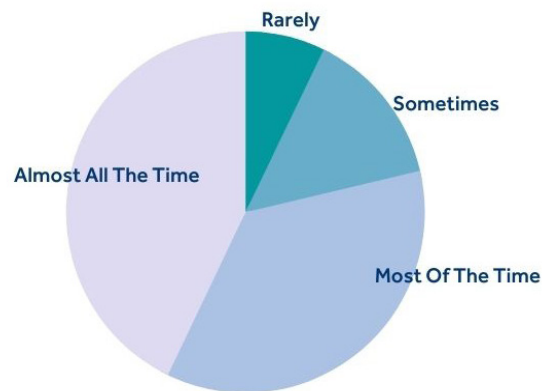
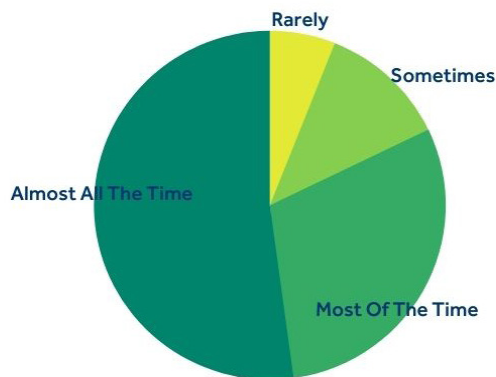
Mrs. Potthoff has noticed how much COVID-19 has affected students, especially sophomores this year and has made sure to let sophomores know that they aren't alone and to not give up when they think they are going to fail.

"We know that kids who are involved in a club or something where they have their group of students that they feel comfortable with...are going to do exponentially better than students who come here, leave and have no connection to East." Potthoff said.

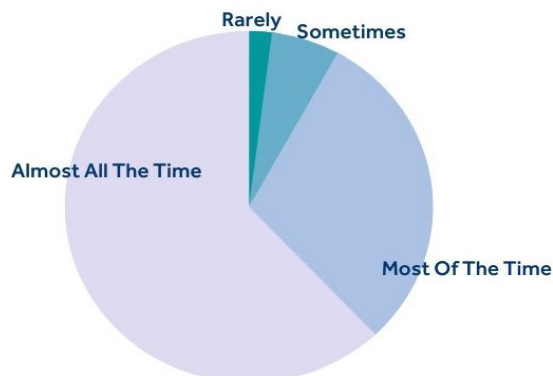
From my own experience I know that being involved in high school can make it even more enjoyable. When you get involved with your surrounding community it can show the people you surround yourself with who you are outside the classroom and give them more of an idea of what truly makes you, You!

With all the changes that have happened in the last year, the East counselors have decided to set a goal for sophomores to try to hit within this next semester. The counselors will be rechecking all the data after this semester to see if they've achieved it. What they want is for the 16% of the freshmen that failed one or more classes last year to reduce to being only 10% or less of the current sophomores. The East counselors also went an extra mile to create a presentation that was over many details that had not been gone over yet or clarified for sophomores. After the presentation, the counselors surveyed 161 students out of the 528 sophomores at East about the helpful tips that were included in the presentation, and these were the results! •

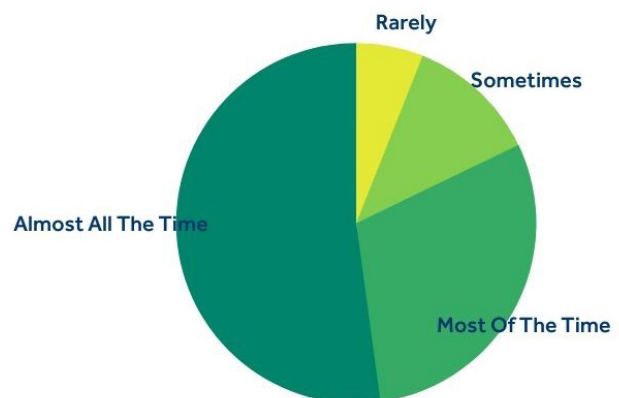
I know how to ask for help when I am struggling. I feel accepted and connected at East High School.



I understand what it means and looks like to be engaged in class.



I know how to cope and stay in class when I am struggling, stressed, or distracted.



SOCIAL BATTERY

EVERYONE NEEDS HUMAN
CONNECTION NO
MATTER HOW THEY
RECHARGE



KAMRYN SNYDER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

There is a large misconception that introversion and extroversion are determined solely by how outgoing and sociable a person is. In reality, one of the major traits in which a personality is distinguished is by how one gains and recharges their energy, or in other words, their social battery. According to Hope Blanton, a therapist located in San Antonio, a social battery is different for every single individual. “Every day we wake up and have a certain amount of energy that we can spend on all responsibilities and activities we have to do,” Blanton said. “A social battery is specific to our ability to connect and relate to other people.”

The term social battery is simply a metaphor for a person’s extent to socialize and be around others. So how does a social battery become drained? To simplify, let’s say everyday when a person wakes up after a full night’s rest, their social battery is at 100%. Throughout the day the individual goes to school, collaborates with other students and teachers, and engages in several face-to-face conversations. For introverts, this can often lead to over-

stimulation which is a substantial energy-drainer. On the flip side, extroverts feed off of socializing and engaging in conversations. Let’s say after school this individual drives home and is by themselves for a significant amount of time. For introverts, this peace is the perfect opportunity to recharge in a quiet environment. For extroverts, seclusion only drains their battery.

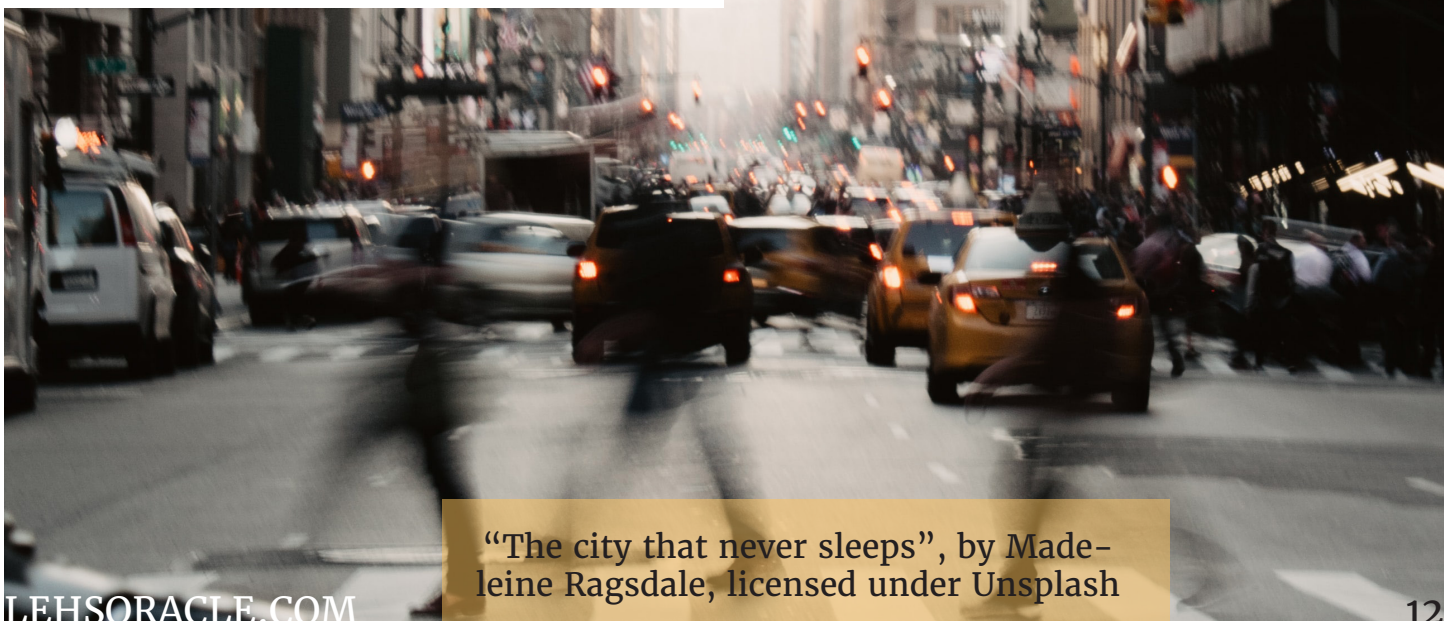
Despite the obvious, there are other factors besides just socializing or being around other people that either deplete or replenish energy. Being the center of attention can be a chief component. Whether this means sitting at the front of a classroom, public speaking, or sitting in the middle of a restaurant, feeling as if all eyes are on them can be an introvert’s kryptonite or an extrovert’s best friend. Standing in large crowds or gatherings, such as a concert, can result in large levels of stimulation. Being thrown in a brand new environment and being diverted from a typical routine often removes people from their comfort zone. This situation is energizing for some, while it leaves other people feeling lethargic.

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No matter where an individual falls on the spectrum of introversion to extroversion, and no matter how long it takes your social battery to recharge, there's no need to feel embarrassment or shame. Some individuals require more time to unpack and process all their thoughts. Ignoring your mental and physical limitations can lead to anxiety, exhaustion, and may even manifest into physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, or more. Everyone experiences social burnout from time to time. However, the intensity from which individuals are drained from socializing is a factor that draws the line between introverts and extroverts.

The pandemic kept people from socializing face-to-face, with the exception of immediate families of course. As restrictions have been lifted, many people feel rusty and unable to handle large social events. This issue has affected introverts and extroverts alike, as anxiety and mental health issues make no exception for personality types. In order to get over the hill and back into a social groove, it's important to be aware of how the pandemic has affected a person emotionally, mental

“MAINTAINING
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“The city that never sleeps”, by Madeleine Ragsdale, licensed under Unsplash

ly, and socially. Blanton expands upon the two main responses she's received from patients as life begins to take full swing again.

"One thing, as far as mental health goes, people express that this feels so good," Blanton said. "They feel so much more connected to themselves, connected to others, getting to do normal things... But I'm also hearing a lot of people say they're anxious because all of a sudden we're doing all the things all at once. We're with everybody all the time, our kids are doing all their normal activities, work is back to normal. And so, a lot of people describe it as a very anxious time."

In a society that is centered around this so-called "go mentality," it is essential that every individual gives themselves time to acclimate. Whether that be setting boundaries with others concerning the amount of time you can spend out, or putting an emphasis on maintaining healthy eating and sleeping habits. In Blanton's words, maintaining some level of authority and control over one's own life will help people combat this "firehose of social interaction."

While everyone has had different experiences and personal circumstances during the this pandemic, one universal realization that has reigned true across communities has been a newfound appreciation for social interaction.

Jadyn Maddox, senior student at East High, reflects on how her social

battery was affected by a lack of interaction during the pandemic. "I think people realized, or at least I did as an extroverted person, how much I need people to feel like myself and feel energetic," Maddox said. "When I was alone all the time, it was like, all I wanted to do was talk to people. It's just not the same when you have to do it over a screen... It can recharge you partly, but not like being in person with someone does."

People with introverted personalities have also come to the same conclusion. Aubrey Fornander, senior student at East High, explains the consequences of a lack of social interaction. "A lot of extroverts had trouble trying to connect with people, and even if you're an introvert you still need social interaction," Fornander said. "So I think it made people more appreciative but also had people recognizing that it's ok to be alone."

Everyone needs social interaction, as it's a part of human nature. Many have realized throughout the pandemic how grateful they are for their close friends and family, and how essential human connection is for mental health. No matter how a person's social battery was affected during the pandemic, or how they recharge, we all must attempt to build and maintain relationships to fulfill our need for connection. By accepting our social limitations, and respecting others, we can find a balance between social exhaustion and our identity as social creatures. •

“
WHILE EVERYONE HAS
HAD DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES AND PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES DURING THE THIS PANDEMIC, ONE UNIVERSAL REALIZATION THAT HAS REIGNED TRUE ACROSS COMMUNITIES HAS BEEN A NEWFOUND APPRECIATION FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION.
”

THE EFFECTS OF ISOLATION

ANIKA KEESE, STAFF WRITER

There are few occurrences where every human in the world goes through the same hardship at the same time. During March of 2020 everyone was faced with a new reality. That reality meant that we must be alone for the good of our society, in order to stop the spread of COVID-19. This new, dystopian-feeling reality caused a shift in most people's lives: how they travelled, their social lives, and how they handled the feeling of being alone. Isolation is hard to adapt to, especially while handling fear of the unknown. The effects of isolation during quarantine on society are finally creeping in, including how the community dealt with the situation and how it affected the human psyche.

There were many mental effects of isolation on humans, and these mental effects partner hand in hand with physical effects on the body. According to Tulane University's study on the effects of social isolation and loneliness, loneliness is linked with higher anxiety, depression, and suicide rates. The distress on the human psyche caused many troubling physical consequences. There was a large range of outcomes,

including disrupted sleep patterns, altered immune systems, more inflammation, and an increased risk of heart disease and stroke by about 30%, according to the New York Times. Although we have had a small sum of information on physical complications from society's lockdown, time will tell what else we have taken away. The evidence will continue to grow vastly as young adults grow older and new developments occur.

"ACCORDING TO TULANE UNIVERSITY'S STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS, LONELINESS IS LINKED WITH HIGHER ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND SUICIDE RATES."

While these are alarming new studies, there is a variety of mental health issues that are most prevalent in what we see on a daily basis, in schools, our friendships, and our families. According to the New York Times, those who spend more time alone have more trouble with understanding vague social cues, resulting in those people to become

even more reserved, and the cycle continues. Young people are the group most affected by the challenge of mental health as a result of isolation. As most know, a teen's social life is crucial to their growth and is a large part of a highschool experience. Teenagers rely on friendships to maintain self-worth, anxiety, and depression. In addition, in a study by America's Promise Alliance, one third of teens have reported feeling unhappy or depressed in the months of quarantine. It is clear that the consequences of isolation are based on an individual's experience and hardships they have endured.

Students of East are not an exception to these effects. Anna Tessendorf, a junior, went through the thick of it during the pandemic and experienced what most studies have shown, "My thoughts probably became more depressing because of the collective feeling of hopelessness," Tessendorf said. "I was a lot more likely to lose motivation even with things I enjoyed."

Although this period was mentally challenging and discouraging for most teens, it was something we we experienced as one.

“It started off confusing, I couldn’t talk to most of my friends in person, but my sister had no one to be with either so she was my saving grace,” Tessendorf said.

“It was nice to have people to talk with, but it was such a long time of isolation, which is still happening, that everyone collectively is acting differently, so trying to communicate with people the same is really challenging,” Tessendorf said.

Tessendorf shed light on an important observation, many students are not comfortable being in the same large social environment of high school the same way anymore. Although the struggles of isolation were numerous, it allowed many people to explore their personalities more. “Over quarantine I did a lot of makeup, baking, drawing or making art, dancing, and sewing,” Tessendorf said.

Anna Tessendorf is an outstanding example of a student who faced the challenges of isolation, however, was resilient and able to create a new purpose for herself throughout.

Focusing on our young and impressionable students who have faced the hardships of isolation is important, however, what is often neglected through the lens of education is teachers, who have had to adapt to an overwhelming situation of online instruction and the absence of normalcy within the classroom. Katherine Lansman, a biology and physical science teacher, battled with quarantine in the midst of her very first teaching experience. First, Lansman taught chemistry at Northstar in January of 2020, only getting a couple of months experience



“Tube signage, London, during Covid 19 health emergency,” by John Cameron, Licensed by Unsplash.

teaching in the classroom before being thrown into the new world of Covid-19 and beginning to teach at East in the upcoming school year. “The uncertainty of what school would look like in the fall of 2020 was quite unnerving at times, especially during quarantine, when I really couldn’t go out and do much to take my mind off those worrisome thoughts and feelings,” Lansman said.

Similar to teenagers of the pandemic, teachers also struggled in very similar aspects, “It really does affect a person's mental health when it feels like you can't use any of your normal outlets to provide some joy and to help you escape from daily stressors in your life—teachers need time away from school just like students do,” Lansman said.

The difference of environment in the classroom during 2020 was prevalent with A/B days, as students felt the difference of social interaction as well as adults of the building.

“It felt unfair that I couldn't reach those who were on Zoom the same way I was reaching those in the classroom,” Lansman said. “Often as a teacher I found it difficult to really feel like I was doing that good of a job delivering quality content when I couldn't physically see or interact with over half the class.”

“During that difficult time, something that really motivated me was to be a good role model for my students. I believe it was vital for them to see patience, resilience, adaptability, and of course, grace,” Lansman said. “I was determined to do my best to model those values in my own behavior and in my expectations for the class.”

Every person in the school building had a different experience with isolation, pandemic schooling, and learning abilities to cope.

Lansman contained a strong will to be the best teacher she could in such an unnerving time.

Throughout the course of the last two years, although facing adversity from isolation, the community, both nationally and at East, has discovered a new approach to pandemic outcomes concerning mental health. There is no doubt that the world will continue to see the effects of quarantine in the younger and older generations and find new ways to support those who are struggling. •



HAS SOCIAL MEDIA HELPED OR HURT US?

CADY BLACKSTOCK, EDITOR



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As social media became more popular through the years, it began to effect people, especially teens, negatively. Mental health numbers started going up as social media users went up. Problems started appearing.

As we became isolated in the spring of 2020, the rush for communication became heightened for many. We realized that, although many things had already started moving electronically, there were some things that were not necessarily meant to be converted to be held in your hand.

But, there are many positive things happening on the internet. Identities are what define you and social media can help discover different ideas of people around the world. You don't realize that there are people who do the same things as you, like the same things as you, and you discover things you never knew existed, thanks to social media.

"These networks can provide teens with valuable support, especially helping those who experience exclusion or have disabilities or chronic illnesses," Mayo Clinic said. "Teens also use social media for entertainment and self-expression."

Social media is also used to educate. Teens are exposed to current events, serious topics, and things that are outside of the classroom or a simple newspaper. It crosses geographic barriers to find a whole new world. Social media doesn't just help teens discover a world beyond compare. It can be on a business level too.

"Social platforms help you connect with your customers, increase awareness about your brand, and boost your leads and sales," Marketing Insider said.

It has its perks. It's the way that we stay connected across the city, state, or world. We meet new people, discover things, and educated ourselves. It can show you things you didn't know what possible.



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Yet, it's a drug addiction, quite literally. Everytime you get a notification, a stream of dopamine is released, but it only lasts for so long. It's a public health crisis. Essentially, is social media bad? Is there no way to fix it? The cons can overpower the pros of social media.

There are the basic answers that you hear: social media distracts you, it disrupts sleep, it causes a feeling of dissatisfaction, but it is more than that. As social media has made an uprising even since 2012, many have noticed a rise of depression among all, substantially more in teen girls. Bullying has also heightened which takes a huge toll on one's mental health.

"Social media seemed to have a stronger impact on girls, but the relationship was present for boys as well," Jamie Ducharme, writer of Time's article *Social Media Hurts Girls More Than Boys* said.

Poor mental health as a result of social media doesn't appear as frequently in boys as it does girls. However, boys are still affected by the harms of social media. Most teens are compared to one another and they compare themselves against everything and everyone. Who has the best hair? Why does she look like that? Is that real? Comparisons created online turn into rumors.

"Social media sites provide tools that allow people to earn others' approval for their appearance and the possibility to compare themselves to others," Frances Dalomba, writer of *Lifespan*, said.

Getting rid of social media isn't the cure for mental health. There are endless ways of keeping social media but getting the help that you need is important. Social media can even give you sources to help. •



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72%

of Americans in 2021 use at least one type of social media (Pew Research Center)

84%

of Americans ages 18-24 use social media (Pew Research Center)

81%

of Americans use Facebook, which is the highest used social media (Pew Research Center)

QUARANTINE CHANGED TEENAGE POLITICS

BRISA ODENTHAL, EDITOR

When logging onto any social media app, it's almost impossible not to see some form of political content. It's inevitable at this point. Whether it's Instagram, Snapchat, or TikTok, politics have dominated social media. The rise in political content has led to an increase in teenage activism in which teenagers from all over the world are using their platforms to spread their opinions and knowledge which led to more teenagers becoming politically active.

Being stuck in quarantine greatly escalated teenage activism. People had more free time than ever so they spent a lot of time on social media. Many things were political during quarantine, from Covid-19 protocols to the BLM protests to the presidential election. Politics were changing and teenagers were caught up in it. And with all our time off school, teenagers had more time than ever to involve themselves in politics.

A student research submission from the University of Mary Washington titled "A Content Analysis of Political Discourse on TikTok" by Eagle Scholar Devin Carson highlights how social media has had an impact on American politics. Carson says, "Today, social media is an essential campaign tool, with candidates tending to be active on multiple social media platforms simultaneously. It is a way for candidates to market themselves as well as connect with their followers".

Social media is a powerful tool in politics. Every time someone opens a social media app, they are almost immediately faced with opinions from both sides of the aisle. Carson specifically mentions the video sharing app TikTok.

"I noticed that the more I liked one particular viewpoint, the less I would see other perspectives on my 'For You' page... I also noticed that TikTok began recommending videos to me that were extreme on either side of the political spectrum... Given the potential influence of this platform, researchers and everyday people would do well to consider the possible adverse effects to mitigate the polarization of the American political sphere."

Teenagers are some of the biggest users of social media and because of this, they are exposed to the political side of social media. This can be helpful because teenagers are becoming more aware of what is going on around them but it can be dangerous due to all the misinformation and polarization out there.

East High School AP Government and Politics teacher Michaela Schliecher says, "For many youth, social media is the primary, and possibly only, way they receive news or information related to politics. This can be problematic if students don't know how to separate fact from false information. My job is not to tell students that something is wrong or force them to believe a particular political stance, but to help them develop skills to sort through the information that they consume."

It is important to be a good online citizen when it comes to social media and politics. Fact-checking and being aware of source biases is especially important in a time where all it takes to share something to the world is one click.

Schleicher also says, "Social media can be a great source of information, but it's important for all citizens, not just students, to learn how to dissect information they receive online. Something that I teach in my Government and Politics class is civic online reasoning. Students are asked



to consider three key questions when getting information: Who is behind the information? What's the evidence? What do other sources say? If students take the time to read laterally, they can usually determine the purpose of the information."

East High School senior Elijah Shane, who identifies himself as a leftist, believes it is important for teenagers to be involved with politics but is concerned with the never-ending misinformation being spread.

Shane says, "Young people, especially those at the high school age, need to start thinking about politics. It is one of the biggest things that has a direct impact on your life which you have control over. If you want a change to happen be a part of those trying to make a difference... I think the issue lies in the misconception that involvement equals education. Though being involved can help you have a more noticeable increase in your education into political topics, if you are not actively pushing yourself to learn then that involvement is going to waste".

Shane also talks about the changes that occurred between teenagers and politics over quarantine. He admits he has noticed a change in teenage activism in post Covid-19 times, especially when it comes to activism on social media.

Shane says, "Quarantine was a very vulnerable time for all of us all, and political powerhouses preyed on that. I think that quarantine had an increase on ideological polarization. I also think it got more people involved", says Shane, "TikTok has had a huge impact on the political beliefs of teenagers.

During the election season teens were bombarded with political content from the left and right attempting to spread their message. Considering how impressionable teenagers are, these videos, of course, will have an effect on how teenagers think about relating to politics."

Cooper Erikson, another East High School senior, describes himself as more right-leaning. He also believes it is important for teenagers to be involved in politics but is wary of the misinformation constantly being spread on social media.

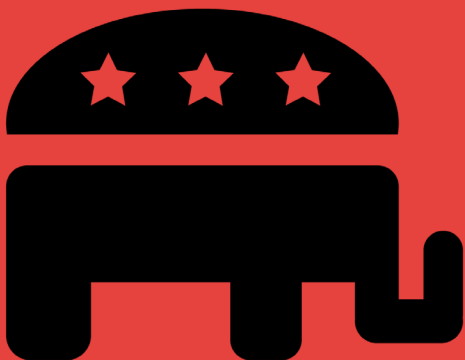
"I think it is important to be educated on what you believe... I think [social media] has given people a lot of differing opinions and given easy access to a lot of information...I think if used correctly it can be beneficial but you can't just believe everything you see. It's important to fact check the things you see," says Erikson.

Wanting more awareness of misinformation on social media and wanting teenagers to be more educated seems to be a common theme amongst people. With all the changes that occurred over quarantine, it is more important than ever to do this.

Erikson says, "I think quarantine got me interested in politics because there was a lot of division in our country over politics and I wanted to understand for myself what I believe."

Quarantine and all the boredom that came with it did a lot to change how teenagers were exposed to politics which has led to a lot of good but also a lot of dangerous spread of information. It is important that people fact-check their sources and make sure they aren't being spoon-fed propaganda.

"Social media is a fantastic tool for spreading news and posting your beliefs, but it does have a huge weakness in spreading misinformation with visually pleasing posts," says Shane. "Especially on Twitter and Instagram where all you have to do is press a button to repost, the spread of misinformation has been a huge disservice to the teens of this generation. Even more so apparent on those that refuse to use a fact checker, convincing themselves of a non-existent bias". ●



TEACHERS ARE HUMAN TOO

HAILEY ANDERSON, STAFF WRITER

A survey was put out to East teachers giving them a chance to share some feelings about their own mental health. Results were anonymous.

An individual's mental health is something that has always been an issue, but an issue that unfortunately, could have no resolution. While it seems as if students are struggling now more than ever, with depression, anxiety, home life, school work, athletics, and additional out-of-school activities, what is often dismissed is the mental health status of teachers. It's often that teachers are overlooked, not out of ignorance, but rather by putting 100% focus on the students.

"We eat, get dressed, have family and friends just like everyone else," one teacher said. "All of us teachers are working as hard as we can and that sometimes goes unnoticed."

By the book, teachers are supposed to be the ones who support their students, staying strong for them, helping them through their struggles, and providing the answers. In addition to school, teachers have families, other jobs, and not

enough time in the day. Teachers are superheroes, but they're not robots.

There are many key causes of teacher stress in our school, including: the loads of paperwork, the meetings, the challenge of finding a substitute or having to cover an extra class, dealing with parents, and most of all student behavior and apathy. To a certain extent, some students have become so apathetic they are unteachable. In addition to student apathy, behavior itself can often be challenging. Whether you grew up in a classroom that was orderly and strict, or if you've seen a movie that takes place in a 20th century school room, it's obvious that education has changed. Not to say that this so-called "strictness" should return, but students seem to have much more leeway and less respect towards their teachers.

"They think they can talk to us however they want or do whatever they want," another teacher said. "Many students don't realize that we are trying to help them, rather than work against them."

Student behaviors are on the rise causing much unwanted stress and frustration for staff. Unfortunately, this is a nation-wide problem. Teachers everywhere are having a difficult time dealing with students. Kayln Belsha, writer of Chalkbeat's "Stress and short tempers" blames the stress of the pandemic on top of being a teenager. A prime example of negative student behavior at East would be the bathroom vandalism that happened during the first quarter. It seems that no matter the amount of redirects, the problem remains unfixed.

"It only takes a few seconds of a



frustrating interaction to throw my whole day off,” a teacher said.

Everyone has difficult days.

Everyone has a life outside of school. That outside life has struggles of its own. The challenge for teachers is that many feel as if they must keep those two lives separate in order to be the role model their students need. Some try to be honest with their kids to show that everyone goes through hard times. It can be difficult to let their guard down, but they often find that students may be more likely to form a relationship if they can connect to their teacher on a personal level.

“If I’m just real with students then they see me more as human,” another teacher said.

What is the Lincoln Public Schools district doing to aid these teachers in their times of stress? A few benefits they provide include extra days off, as well as extra plan days to help lighten the load. There have been less staff meetings giving teachers more time to plan and grade. As far as mental health resources, the district provides counseling services and free access to the full version of Headspace, an app that provides “life-changing skills of meditation and mindfulness.” Insurance offers more coverage on therapy, making it easier for teachers to receive any needed help. Many also mentioned the community the staff at East has created this year to help each other through challenges.

One teacher said, “teachers have really stepped up and been supportive and found fun things to do together.”

While this support system seems to be strong, teachers mentioned a few things they would like to see change to benefit their mental health. For one, the workload piles up and is close to a tipping point. One can only do so much at a time. Teachers would appreciate more support from across the district, not just other teachers.

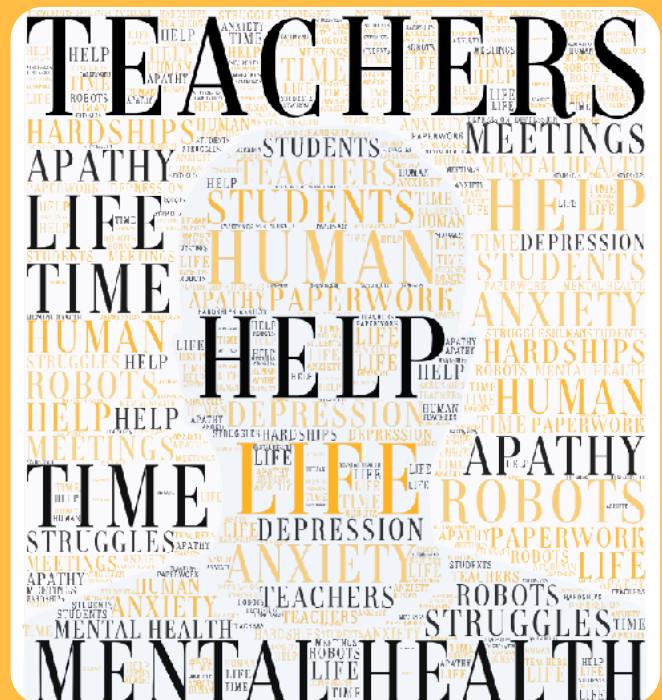
“We really should just work better together to lift each other up,” a teacher said.

Teacher morale is down. As the year goes on, there are more demands, more stress, and less enthusiasm. As mental health cripples, so does motivation, passion, and the gusto that every teacher needs.

“We are going to be in a place very soon that schools will not be able to fill jobs because there is no one applying for them anymore,” a teacher said.

Teaching is hard and the challenges only grow every day. The school system is losing teachers with no one new to fill positions. The spirit of teaching is dwindling. Appreciate your teachers because they are struggling. The people who help grow the minds of tomorrow are struggling. They don’t have much left to give and awareness of this issue is vital. Teachers are not something society can lose.

One teacher said it best, “Respect your teachers, do your work, and be kind to all.” •



RELIGION AND IDENTITY

ELLIOT GRANT, STAFF WRITER

Maybe you go to church every Sunday. Maybe you fast for Ramadan. Maybe you have crystal-filled altars in your room. Or maybe you do none of these things. No matter what religion or practice you choose, there is always a way to find salvation, peace, and stability in your life. These times of COVID have put struggle upon us all, but our faith can make such a big difference in our lives. There is always hope and help.

So, why does this matter for us? Well, in America, the population is majority Christian population, 70.6% to be exact. 5.9% of our population practices a non-Christian religion, and the remaining percent, 22.8%, is not affiliated with any religion at all. This includes people who are atheists and agnostics. It's always good to be aware of those around you, and what they believe.

East High junior Tobey Roberts considers himself a Christian. He believes his faith can help him get through times of need.

"My faith has helped me when I'm in times of need, or when I feel alone, because I can turn to God when I don't have anyone else to talk to," Roberts said. He also heavily values his family and friends.

"[They] were put into my life by God for a reason, and they help me when I'm off

"I have confidence in what makes sense to me."

—Jacob Dodge, sophomore

track with God... I can help somebody else out too... It makes me feel important."

Like many people, Roberts came to a decision on his own of whom or what he chose to follow.

"I was born into a Christian family so it wasn't my choice, but after a while I

made the choice for myself. It's something I value and want to be in my life," Roberts said.

Sadly, every faith comes with skeptics or haters.

"A lot of people think all Christians are homophobic, but many Christians are all-inclusive, and the name 'Christian' gets tarnished by some people who aren't good people. Christianity teaches us to love everybody no matter what sexuality or race you are," Roberts said. This is a good example of a strong sense of morality that can be found in almost any Christian.

Now, what about that 22.8% of people who are non-affiliated? Well, 3.1% of those people are atheist. East sophomore Jacob Dodge is part of that 3.1%. He was born into a Christian family, but came to his own conclusions of his beliefs.

"I decided what made the most sense to me after experiencing both sides, and I decided that the existence of no God made more sense." Though some may argue otherwise, many

atheists find their ways through life without the guidance of a higher power.

“I use thoughtful reasoning, and my past experiences,” Dodge said. He means that he takes his past experiences, and decides how he could have handled them better, to help himself move forward.

“I have confidence in what makes sense to me,” he also said. It is apparent that he is experiencing positivity in his life because of this, as confidence is a skill everyone needs to have. Additionally, it builds self-esteem and self-reliance.

Christian families with atheist children may misunderstand their beliefs, just like non-Christian may misunderstand Christianity, as stated before.

“My family assumes that because I don’t believe in god that I don’t have integrity, because I don’t have anybody to hold myself accountable to,” Dodge said, regarding this topic.

Personally, I have had trouble navigating my religious identity. I grew up in Christian households, and attended Noah’s Ark Christian Daycare, here in Lincoln. I decided for most of my life that I was Christian, until I wasn’t. Then, I decided I was atheist... and agnostic... now, I am religious once again.

No matter your beliefs, it’s always important to have integrity, confidence, and kindness. It is only up to you what you choose to do with what you believe. Whether that be going to church every Sunday, or wearing a hijab, or having a bar/bat mitzvah, exploring your religious identity, especially in times like these, is becoming more important than ever.

Having faith can help you through difficult times, or deciding that it’s not for you may be the answer. Again, whatever you choose, it is an important part of life for everyone on the globe today, and it is ongoingly necessary to ask yourself: What do I believe in? •



Above: “Church House by Be Creator on Creative-Commons. Right: Muslim man in prayer, salah.



DOWNFALL OF AP

SABRINA BENFORD, STAFF WRITER



10% of students will forget their pencil for an AP test (Public domain)

Everyone remembers the spring break of 2020 that started that never seemed to end. This was due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. In the 2020-21 school year, we saw schools going back to “normal.” But a few things were still different. In the beginning of the school year East had an A-B schedule, the mental health of students had dropped, and students used notes on tests in classes that had never allowed notes before, specifically in AP classes. But for AP exams, notes are never allowed, not even in the year of notes.

“In AP Calculus it was [a] pretty significant drop [in scores],” AP Calculus teacher Joseph Hovorka said. “I’m sure there’s other factors, but I think part of it was they were allowed to use notes for at least part of the test...but not on the AP test.”

There was also a jump all across the board of failure rates in classes. “Our failure rate last year in terms of numbers of F’s in class was higher than it’s ever been,” counselor Joe Schlegelmilch said. “We had a higher failure rate last year, [but] not with seniors not graduating”. This statement is not meant to blame any of the grades for the failure rate just to note the fact that the failure rate increasing did not affect the amount of seniors who graduated.

With last year’s failure rate, people may ask why students were even allowed to use their notes in the first place, since it only seemed to hurt grades? This is because of the A-B schedule that East had during the 2020-21 school year. For the first three quarters of the school year East used an A-B schedule, which is when students in the A group were in school for the first 2-3 days of the week, depending on the week. Then students in the B group were in school for the remaining days of the week. Half of the students stayed home in order to lessen the spread of COVID-19.

“No matter how hard the teacher tried...there’s no replacement for in person,” Schlegelmilch said. Keep in mind, these events happened very quickly. We heard about it on the news then we were dealing with it. This was the best option for East at the time.

“It was better than nothing,” Schlegelmilch said. Every staff member at East did their best to keep the school running. “Having zoom was better than nothing.”

There was also another option for kids, other than the A-B schedule. It was C days, or full time in-person for students if they had special permission from their counselors for mental health or other reasons, academics (grades failing), or a doctor’s recommendation.

These reasons changed over time but overall, “it helped a lot of our students to be back full time,” Schlegelmilch said.

Even with measures to help kids succeed it was hard to do. The pandemic put a lot of pressure on kids and left some students missing at least two weeks of school because of quarantining due to exposure of COVID-19.

Because there was a risk of missing weeks of class, some students dropped out of their harder classes. Missing two weeks of any class will set you back.

P A N D E M I C G R A D E S

“There’s always certain times out of a semester where the number of kids dropping classes increases,” Schleglemilch said.

“Especially after the first test in an AP class. But I think last year we had more after that first test.” It is normal for students to drop an AP class they don’t feel passionate about.

Grades might have also been affected by other issues, outside of school. It is hard to tell what someone is dealing with at home or in their personal life. With something as life changing as a pandemic, mental health definitely took a hit.

“For many of our students, [there was a] big impact, again not across the board,” Schleglemilch said.

When your head is running at a thousand miles an hour, it’s hard to keep track of what’s going on. Even with everything that has happened between March 2020 and November 2021, students still do their best to keep going in the face of COVID-19. In the first quarter of the 2021-22 school year, a small sample group of AP students were surveyed. 81% reported they participate in three or more extracurricular activities. Last year’s drop out rate was big but the dropout rate of AP classes has decreased, with only 22% reporting dropping one or more classes this quarter. oom may have even helped students learn the skill of time management, with 77% reporting they feel they are at a 7.5 out of 10.

In the end, we have to give credit to the East’s staff and students.

“I want to give students credit for last year because last year was hard and different,” Schleglemilch said.

“I want to give students credit for last year because last year was hard and different. ”

“I would say our level of perserverance in general was higher because of that.” It’s hard to know what the future will be even in times of uncertainty. Some students did well for themselves and rose to the occasion. Taking a step back from everything that has happened and looking at what went well is something everyone one of us needs to do. We all have had our challenges but diamonds were made for this pandemic’s coal. •

"I loved playing golf in years past, but I knew that this year something had to give, so as it was approaching I was super anxious with everything on my plate and golf ended up being the thing that I chose," 12th grader, Harley Paprocki said. "I felt like there were so many other student athletes that are able to balance all these things so well, so why can't I? I think after the pandemic everyone lost their momentum and lost motivation. That year and a half was really hard to come back from it and I think everyone can relate to that. I think we just need to understand that it's ok to build our speed again and we don't have to do everything."

-HARLEY PAPROCKI

EMERY ERIKSON, STAFF WRITER

IT'S OKAY TO NOT BE OKAY

We are all tired. We are all burnt out. We are all struggling in different areas in our lives. We deserve to allow ourselves to have a break and understand that it is okay to need help.

"The second week of school I dropped my diff math class because I didn't have enough time to study for all my classes, even though I've always taken diff math classes," Kendal Hase-mann, junior, said. "I could tell my mom was upset that I wasn't taking a diff class and thought I wasn't trying hard enough. Last year made it really difficult to focus and it kind of flowed into this year making it hard to stay caught up and focus in class."

-KENDAL HASEMANN

"I had to drop my diff pre-calc class because I failed the first quiz of the year and they had to drop me," 10th grader, Elliot Grant said. "I also had to drop track... I only went for a couple weeks and fell so behind in my classes and had so much homework." I'm used to being good at things, and when I have to drop things it makes me feel terrible. I feel like a failure. Having that sense of like other people are going through this too helped a lot and just finding things that I like doing, but also that I'm good at is so important."

-ELLIOT GRANT

I grew up always wanting to do the best. I always wanted people to be impressed with my work effort and how dedicated I was to whatever thing that I was doing at that time. I took the hard classes, tried new sports, or joined clubs and activities that looked fun. I never wanted to say no to anything out of fear of disappointing someone or people thinking I was lazy or not good enough. For so long I lived my life always on the go with no time to slow down. Then COVID hit.

Every class, sport, club and activity got taken away from me. I was alone with only my family to talk to. For so long I had found my identity in the temporary things of the world, that when they were all gone I didn't know who I was or what I wanted to do. For so long I took everyone else's opinion into consideration before even forming my own. I made decisions based on what I thought people would be impressed with or wanted to see me do. I spent those couple months in quarantine doing things that I enjoyed for myself, not because anyone told me what to do or what I thought would impress people.

This year when school finally resumed completely normally and we got to come back to school full time, I was positive that everything would be back to normal and I was ready to put on my fake smile and resume life like it was two years ago. I rejoined all my clubs and activities, signed up for the diff and AP classes that had never been a struggle before. I was ready for a great, normal year back at school.

A week in I had failed two tests and multiple quizzes in my AP classes, I was behind in my easier classes because I was trying to stay caught up with everything

else. I was working my normal 20 hours a week and getting home at 9pm like always, but it didn't feel normal. I was tired and overwhelmed. I missed my friends and family because I had no time to spend with them. I hardly talked to anyone during the day because of all the things running through my head that had to be done. At work I stressed about the piles of homework I had to do when I got home. I stayed up until two in the morning most nights and functioned the rest of the next day off of four hours of sleep. I wasn't taking any time for myself to reflect on how I had been feeling, which made me feel burned out and even more anxious than I already was. My whole life I grew up with these high expectations that had been set by myself and the world.

I wanted to be accepted and liked by so many people I didn't care what it took.

The past 2 years have been hard on everyone. Even the people who don't seem to be phased and

the people who have straight A's and the ones that have kept up like normal. We were locked in our homes for almost five months and it's ok if we didn't bounce back from that right away. Our identity shouldn't be found in the things we do or the grades we get. We shouldn't allow the things we are good at or aren't so good at to determine our worth. The recognition or pride we get from being able to meet the high expectations set in today's world isn't worth the stress and anxiety that comes along with that. It's ok to need a break and it's ok to let go of the things that aren't bringing you joy or helping you in any way. It's important to remember that we are stronger than the world wants us to believe and asking for help doesn't make you weak. •

YOU ARE FREE TO CHALLENGE
YOURSELF, WHILE ALSO BE-
ING GENTLE WITH YOURSELF.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO EV-
ERYTHING ALL AT ONCE.



IT'S OK TO TAKE A BREAK

PEYTON SVEHLA, STAFF WRITER

According to the American Institute of Stress, about 33% of people report feeling extreme stress, 77% of people experience stress that affects their physical health, and 73% of people experience stress that affects their mental health. Whatever the origin of our stress is—school, relationships, sports, jobs, etc.—taking a break can significantly benefit mental and physical health.

In today's society, we are pressured into doing things faster and more efficiently. We are educated that there are no limits to how fast we can get something done, and taking breaks is not necessary, nor is it normalized. Society's signs of productivity are cramming our schedules and getting as much done in as little time necessary. Some individuals are even afraid of taking breaks, fearing failure and lack of achievement. The complication with this societal norm is that people are not wired to be working constantly. Instead, one of our necessities is taking breaks.

For many people, life can be portrayed as a never ending cycle. In the perspective of a high school student for example. They might struggle to pull themselves out of bed, get ready for the monotonous day, eat some breakfast if they have time, and head off to school. They sit at a desk from 8:00 to 3:00 with a brief break to pull out a lunch and relax, followed by more classes. When that is over, they may go to a job, a sports practice, or home, watch a show or two if they're lucky, and restart the process over and over again for the next 5 days, for 13 years of their life. After that, they may continue to go to school in college, or they may get a job. The average person retires at the age of 61, where at that point a person finally gets to sit down, relax, and at last, receive authority in their life.

But what if I told you that you do not have to wait until half of your life is already eaten up to break this repetitive cycle? This is where the grace of breaks blesses us. Whether it's taking an hour to get coffee with a friend, sitting outside where the only voice you hear are the thoughts in your head accompanied by the chirping of birds in the distance, or going to the gym to work out over your lunch, breaks can help us to refresh our day to day schedule.



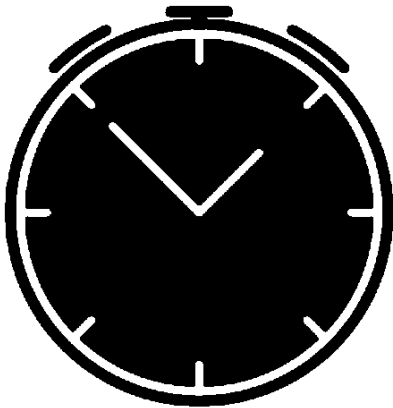
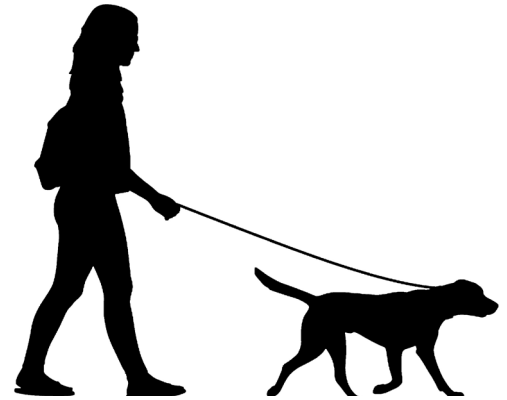
"It's normal to feel overwhelmed maybe a day here, a day there," Lincoln East social worker Danielle Swanson said. "But if it continues that you feel overwhelmed on a weekly basis or monthly basis, it's time to kind of reevaluate things and put into perspective what may be contributing to that feeling of being overwhelmed."

Although there is an overabundance of options for ways to take breaks, it is common for people to struggle with taking time to themselves even if they know it is for their own good. Fortunately, there are many resources available to help someone get started. Some of the best resources can be found inside our high school. These resources are our school counselors, social workers, administration, or even a trustworthy teacher. There are also many resources outside of our high school as well, including free online counseling, such as eTherapyPro or TalkWithStranger! These resources can help give you advice on how to take some time to yourself and click pause on the stresses of life.

"Each person deserves a day away in which no problems are confronted, no solutions searched for." Maya Angelou says. "Each one of us needs to withdraw from the cares which will not withdraw from us." •

GOING OUTSIDE

According to Health Matters, studies have shown being outdoors lowered levels of cortisol, a hormone that's a marker for stress. Not only does going outside give us the chance to relax and unwind, it improves vision, provides vitamin D, and lowers blood pressure. Spending time outside helps us to wind down and reduce stress.



TAKING MICROBREAKS

Microbreaks can improve our ability to concentrate, along with reducing stress in the workplace. There are many ways to take a microbreak, such as stepping outside, making a cup of tea or coffee, or just walking around. Stanford Environmental Health and Safety recommends letting your eyes relax when working on the computer for long periods of time by implementing the 20/20/20 rule. Every 20 minutes look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

MEDITATION

Meditating regularly can allow us to do more work in the same amount of time along with increasing concentration power. In the opinion of Lifehack.org, meditation allows our bodies to go into deep relaxation and eliminate jumbled thoughts. Meditating everyday can strengthen our brains and allow our minds to focus on the present moment.



LETTING THE MIND WANDER

Letting the mind wander is a great opportunity to let the brain relax. Research has concluded that there are connections between creativity and letting our minds wander and that this simple and easy task can increase overall performance in the workplace.

ARE OUR PANDEMIC COPING SKILLS HURTING US?

AVA BARTELS, EDITOR

With the rise of COVID in March 2020, the world was put into lockdown, and each resident in America was confined to their homes. It didn't matter who they were, what they had going on in their lives, or their vacation plans, everything was cancelled. Everybody, ranging from kindergarteners to businessmen, had to entertain themselves amidst the ever changing world. In a way, everyone was cut off from one another and had to cope by themselves. People began to take up new hobbies, start businesses, and even get in shape. But in reality, only a few were able to cope in these healthy ways and the majority of people weren't so lucky. People immersed themselves into the digital world with the hopes of making their world a little brighter, but times were bleak.

Thankfully, we're now

out of lockdown. That was then and this is now, right?

Unsurprisingly, with the absurd amount of free time provided during lockdown, millions of people flocked to TikTok and other outlets that would allow them to entertain and distract themselves. Another example is the unhealthy levels of Netflix streaming that took place during quarantine. The average Netflix user in 2019 averaged (an already large amount of) 2 hours of content everyday. But, in the beginning stages of quarantine 2.31 million more people purchased a Netflix subscription and the average viewing time was bumped up to 3.2 hours a day. The repercussions of this world-wide increase of entertainment are lasting longer than the beginnings of quarantine by affecting how we cope and handle "stressfully hard" situations to this day. Lori Hemmett, school counselor at East, believes that social media is the instigator that encourages the majority of our social problems.

"...[social media] makes people feel 'connected', however, as we know those are false feelings," Hemmett said.

"People are not as connected and tend to self isolate which leads to nega-

"PEOPLE ARE NOT AS CONNECTED AND TEND TO SELF ISOLATE WHICH LEADS TO NEGATIVE SELF PERCEPTION AND OTHER SKEWED THINKING PATTERNS."
HEMMETT SAID

tive self perception and other skewed thinking patterns."

When legitimately considered, it's obvious that six donuts, an entire bottle of alcohol, or ten episodes of Tiger King cannot not fix anybody's problems. But, the majority of the time the consumer is chasing after these "fixes" because of the immediate satisfaction they know they'll receive.

"I think a lot of kids rely on distraction as a technique rather than facing the issue and making a plan to fix it," Hemmett said.

At the apex of quarantine, East students were plopped into the new environment of online learning and, subsequently, stress and loneliness built up for the majority of the student body. Now, faced with the pressures of school without the connection, students, along with their grades are suffering.

I THINK A LOT OF KIDS RELY ON DISTRACTION AS A TECHNIQUE RATHER THAN FACING THE ISSUE AND MAKING A PLAN TO FIX IT, HEMMETT SAID.

But, life seemingly moved on and now it's a new school year. Zoom learning is gone and everybody is expected to be caught up and ready to learn. Emily Wiles is a senior at East and from her perspective, being brought back to school after only learning a little during quarantine was unfair, but necessary.

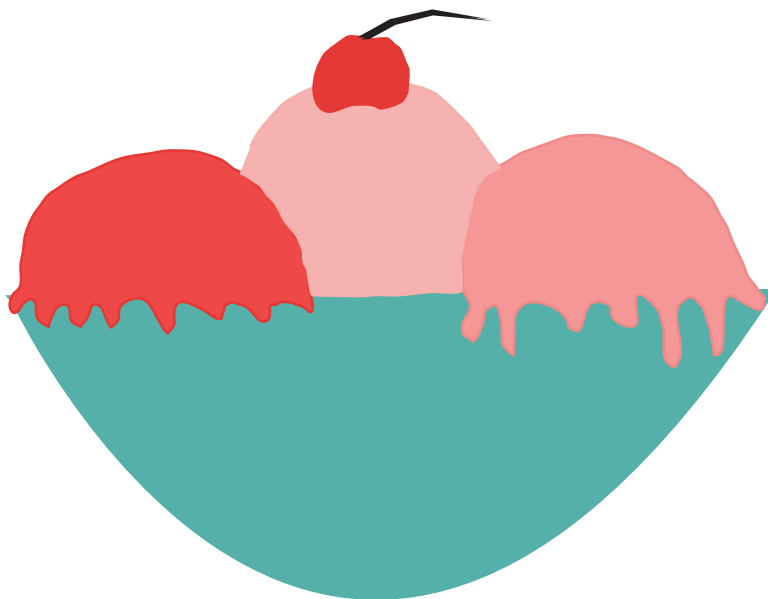
"I was going to take AP Calculus but I got into the class and realized I learned so little in my Pre-Calculus class the year before that it wasn't reasonable for me to take AP," Wiles said. "That's just the reality, but if we want things to be normal again, we have to put in extra effort by taking initiative in the areas we're behind in."

The main enemy that should be blamed for the struggles many students experienced isn't necessarily one activity students participated in while they were isolated, but it was the culmination of numerous unhealthy habits that they acquired and carried over to their zoom learning classes.

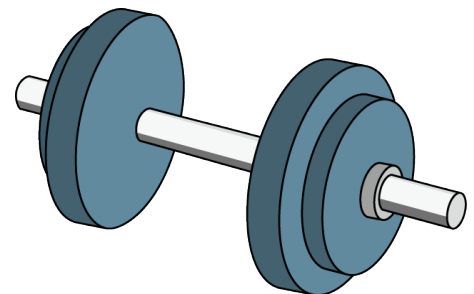
"I found myself overall on my phone more often, and I spent less time doing important tasks like my homework," Wiles said. "I found myself constantly exhausted by doing very little, and I often wanted to take naps. I still find myself struggling with these things today."

Although everyone can get light from the sun and not just from their computer screens now, many people are still choosing electronics. At this point, people know that they can see what they want to see and hear what they want to hear from their phones. So, more people are going to their phones instead of what can truly fulfill and satisfy them. Everyone needs connection, companionship with other people, and enough time to get things done. When these things are compromised people's well-being suffers, because of their inability to control what's happening to them, or how they feel. There are positive ways to cope, and some of those ways really do work. However, this doesn't mean that it's acceptable to adopt positive coping systems while continuing to shy away and replace friends with Netflix characters. Turning to positive or negative coping mechanisms to replace the essential aspects of life will never work, and will leave people more numb and alone than ever.

"I wish there could be an action plan by student leaders to get off of social media and get into the real world," Hemmett said. "Put the phones away, show up, participate, don't watch and compare...until kids do this and become role models for each other we will continue to live within the confines of what is 'accepted' in cyberspace." •



Common coping skills include eating, working out, and others.



READ THESE LIPS

HOPE SHORTRIDGE, STAFF WRITER

The pandemic changed everything. From masks to social distancing and isolation, the world we once knew adapted into what is becoming the new normal. The global struggle of adapting to everyday life in ways never done before has led to higher stress levels. An often forgotten perspective is those who are hard of hearing. Those who are blind, deaf, and/or mute face added daily struggles failed to be appropriately recognized by society.

One of the many struggles attributed to the pandemic and masks is the inability to lip read. As defined by the Oxford dictionary, to lip read is to “understand speech from observing a speaker's lip movements.” Even for those who are not hard of hearing, lip reading can be a valuable skill that improves communication and levels of interaction. Through exploring the life of one of Lincoln East’s own so-

cial worker, Tami Rembolt, and examining the new reality of teaching phonics with a mask, we are able to experience a view into adjusting to life after the pandemic.

Tami Rembolt is in her second year as a social worker here at East. Rembolt has a condition that affects her ability to hear and understand consonants, requiring her to wear a hearing aid.

“I have a congenital issue...I wasn’t born with it, but it is genetic and mine progresses over time,” said Rembolt. “It’s called otosclerosis: the hardening of the stapes bone in your ear. When that bone hardens it doesn’t conduct sound as well.”

Since Rembolt came to East when we were wearing masks, she had to figure out a way to communicate her hearing loss, while building relationships at the same time.



“I’ve just had to be more open about it and explain to people that I am hard of hearing. That way we can be more conscientious about our communication,” said Rembolt. “Since they were new relationships with students, I was having to introduce myself and disclose that from the beginning.”

THE STRUGGLE OF READING LIPS AMIDST A PANDEMIC

Lip reading is a skill that pre-pandemic Ms. Rembolt (and many others) heavily relied on. The pandemic has put a physical barrier in the ability to communicate effectively and efficiently. Wearing masks makes everything so much harder.

“If I can’t understand what someone is saying, I concentrate harder on their mouth while they are talking to me,” said Rembolt. “I do rely on the shape the mouth makes. When people’s mouths are covered up, I have a hard time figuring out which words people are saying.”

Overall, the pandemic has made everyone more tired than usual. For Ms. Rembolt, this is an accurate representation of her daily life. Mental health struggles have increased, and as a social worker, the demand for people who need resources and services has increased.

“I am more tired at the end of the day than I would normally be,” said Rembolt. “Number one, I am busy. But number two, I am having to work harder to hear and that makes me more tired by the end of the day.”

From a phonics perspective, the pandemic has put in a physical barrier that affects teaching the way your mouth needs to move. Here at East, the speech-language pathologists Kathy Dawson has had to adapt to new ways of doing their job during a pandemic. Ms. Dawson talked about how face coverings have impacted the ability to lip read.

“Masks make it almost impossible to lip read, if that’s something a person relies on,” said Dawson. “They limit the facial expressions we see, distort the tone of our voice and lower our volume...which makes it harder for people to understand each other. Also being socially dis-

tant has made it harder to communicate”.

To deal with such difficulties, when Ms. Dawson has a student, she uses the mask as a way to strengthen communication skills overall. She does this by consciously addressing the difficulties that masks bring.

“Does that mean we might have to raise our volume, yes, so we are being more conscious about raising our volume,” said Dawson. “Does it mean we might have to articulate more precisely, yes. So we are being very mindful of what we need to do to make our speech clear, and telling kids it’s directly a product of having a masks.”



TAMI REMBOLT
-SOCIAL WORKER
KYLO
-THERAPY DOG



KATHY DAWSON
-SPEECH-LANGUAGE
PATHOLOGIST

Even though they can be annoying and present a lot of difficulties, masks can aid us with the necessary skills needed for life. Using good volume, articulating clearly, and facing the person you are speaking to can be useful in many scenarios. Whether it's a job interview, a class like Oral Comm, or just talking to friends, these skills can help with basic communication, even though having a mask makes things harder. Our everyday life is transforming into the "new normal", and as a society there is a need to continue to adjust and figure out what works best given the circumstances.

"I'm hoping our new normal will be that we still keep focusing on clear communication, and encouraging kids to articulate their sounds the best they can," Dawson said. "Use eye contact, and know that even if we do get rid of the masks, you could be at a noisy restaurant, have a grandma who's losing their hearing, or be in a noisy workplace. Hopefully, the skills that we learn with the masks will be good skills we can use in other places, and we will continue to teach those."

Despite the inevitable obstacles of teaching with a mask and being able to communicate, there is still hope for what is to come and reassurance that things will be okay.

"We're very happy to do what we need to do to keep safe and keep everyone healthy; we're good at figuring out how to help people communicate regardless of the barrier, this is just a different type of barrier," said Dawson. •

FEAR AND HOW IT AFFECTS US

DEVON BEECHLEY, STAFF WRITER

"THE WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND CREATIVELY TO FEAR, WITHOUT TRYING TO ERADICATE THE SOURCE OF THAT FEAR."
-ESPERANZA SPALDING

Fear is a key component to the survivability and evolution of every creature, from the smallest bugs to the largest of biomasses. But like everything else in our lives, our fear is controlled by small amounts of science juice in our brains. During the moment that a person is officially afraid, their body will release hormones that can shut down parts of the body not needed for immediate survival. This includes, but is not limited to, our digestive track or our bladder, areas that we associate with being overwhelmed with fear. When afraid, our hearts beat faster so that our muscles can run faster and sustain for longer. It makes us choose between "fight or flight," but our choice is irrelevant as the human body does this automatically. Our brains in fact are disturbingly predictable when it comes to fear, especially if it's chronic. Last year, we all were subjected to the looming fear of danger from COVID, political strife, and the threat of global warming. There's never a shortage of things that we can be afraid of, but it's how we deal with that fear that matters.

We can identify four aspects of ourselves that can be affected by chronic fear. First, the long term

memory can be affected and damaged by chronic fear. Our brain produces hormones that overflow our emotional range and fill us with fear and anxiety. Someone who lives with fear constantly sees the world through a scary and unbearable lens, as an individual's memories justify it.

Second, our physical health will automatically react to new threats. If in immediate danger, our bodies shut down unnecessary systems. If the suffering is happening over a long period of time, then our brains will continue to neglect those functions. This commonly leads to malnutrition and causes cardiovascular damage by overworking the heart. This can create a domino effect leading to heart problems, and even lead to premature death. Next, our emotional processing and reactivity can be heavily affected.

Fear can interrupt the way we process emotions and read non-verbal cues. The interactions we have with people can be daunting after months of chronic fear. Right after quarantine, many people were nervous to see other people again. However, most individuals were unaware of the source of their fear. If our emotional processing is damaged it can lead to shortages of our happy hormones like serotonin and dopamine. This leads me to the final aspect of our lives impacted by fear: our mental health. Constant fear leads to depression, anxiety, and paranoia.

Margaret Errazo, a new junior to East, doesn't remember much of the previous year. She was on Zoom and brand new to East High School. Errazo was terrified that her final years of high school would be completely different from the school she came from in Illinois. She left her friends, her environment, and had to make a new home over Zoom. She was anxious that she wasn't going to make friends or a new life. But when we were allowed back into the school, Errazo had to grit her teeth and push herself.

"This is junior year," Errazo said. "Everyone already has their groups already." Errazo stated her doubts of wanting to fit in during a time where nobody could see her smile. But, after a time, she was able to relate to her peers. She grew as a person who had a new philosophy about fear. "Just be yourself. That's all you can be," Errazo said. She still talks to her old friends when she's afraid, but she is always growing and pushing herself to adapt to an ever changing world.

On a usual day to day basis, fear isn't always at the front of our minds as human beings. We tend to wake up, make breakfast, go to work, and do things that give our lives meaning. Facing fear is often set in the background as we go about our daily lives. But, what does facing fear day in and day out actually look like? Enter Ken Koziol, a homicide detective who's served 44 years in Lincoln. He worked as a uniformed officer, former member of the SWAT, Sargent of

white collar crimes and internal affairs, as well as a member of the Internal Resource Office.

"Officers can come to us if they are in a stressful situation," Koziol said. "We try to assist them in getting some assistance, whether it be family, them, or the kids."

Koziol spoke about the fear that most officers face nowadays and how their fear affects their lives as parents.

"Officers are subjected to a lot of abuse on the streets," Koziol continued. "They are expected to take it. The fear that one is going to try to twist what they do and cause issues. Officers are subjected to losing their



jobs or being sued.”

In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement back in the summer of 2020 and the insurrection on January 6th, the police have been put in the crosshair of both political extremes. Koziol is afraid the political climate will take a long time to turn around and continue to get worse for uniformed officers.

Koziol explained that police officers go through a lot of preparation and training before moving on to active duty. Even going as far to be paired up with other experienced officers so that they can have different perspectives on the job.

Over time, his career began to take a toll on him as he moved up the

ladder. Koziol admits that he’s personally faced a lot of trauma, saying that he “doesn’t feel” fear anymore.

Koziol nails home the point of how to deal with these fears. Promoting self care, and a willingness to step back every once and awhile.

“I’m making sure to care for myself so that I’m able to deal with [fear],” Koziol said.

Human beings can’t escape fear. It is and always will be a staple in the day to day lives of everyone in the world. But, the way that the world responds, and copes with fear could be the way we feel less afraid. Take care of the people who need it and remember that there is always a different way to solve the problem of fear. •



The Rorschach test:
A psychological test that records a subjects interpretations of inkblots. Some psychlogiest use this test to determine personality characteristics and emotionl functioning. Created in 1921, it is a tribute to what we see in the dark of our minds, and how our mind sees the world.

HOW THE GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN SHORTAGE HAS BEEN AFFECTING FOOD AVAILABILITY

KYLIE BROWN, STAFF WRITER

Starting with supply breaks in the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, the global halt of production, work, and movement of goods and supplies has recently accumulated to ghastly amounts of supply chain stoppage around the world.

As read in the article “The World Economy’s Supply Chain Problem Keeps Getting Worse,” published in late August of this year from Bloomberg newspaper, “A supply chain crunch that was meant to be temporary now looks like it will last well into next year as the surging Delta variant upends factory production in Asia and disrupts shipping, posing more shocks to the world economy.”

For months, this issue has continued to spike. Shiploads of goods are stuck in harbors with no workers to unload them due to worker shortages -- another effect of last year’s havoc on the circle of supply -- and no one to deliver them, and as such, some store shelves are quickly becoming empty and prices are skyrocketing. In one particular aspect of the supply chain certain foods are becoming harder to obtain and make available to the consumer body, and somewhere we’ve seen this is right here at East.

Around early October, the school cafeteria ran out of the everyday-served spicy chicken sandwiches; a few days later, they ran out of American cheese. Though the reason for the lack of the food products wasn’t detailed, it’s highly likely that the school was unable to receive its shipments of these foods due to supply chain shortages of the specific products, which likely caused the food to either slow in production or be unable to be delivered.

Massive amounts of foods and related supplies are part of what’s been unable to be delivered to the companies that use them and the markets that sell them and that shortage is being felt everywhere.

However, as Drew Brown, CIO of Union Bank and Trust said, “There’s plenty of food. The food’s there. It’s just the means, the methods, for getting the food processed and shipped and on store shelves...there are kinks in the system.”

The supply shortage is an immensely complicated topic to grapple with and to understand the food supply chain issue, it’s essential to first understand it’s an everything supply chain issue. It’s not confined to one supply or field. This global bottleneck -- when there’s more imports than the natural flow of said imports can allow, which creates an effect similar to pouring water through a bottle’s neck -- is an issue that has affected every aspect of the supply chain and every involved party.

Everything from raw materials to simple commodities to complex multi-component items -- all things that may be taken for granted -- are being thrown into harder to obtain straits as the resources that make them up are clogged in the backed-up line of supply.

And much like a physical injury, inflammation -- inflammation of price in this case



Another example of slightly increased prices on strawberries

-- is what groups are finding themselves with as the availability of items is slowing to a trickle.



Many containers are waiting in harbors to be unloaded, Mika Baurneister, Unsplash License.

And as with any example of supply and demand, as a lack of food and supplies has increased over the last few months, prices have already and are predicted to increase in correlation, which only makes the already limited supplies harder to get ahold of.

"Container ships (that transport items) cost as much as fifteen times as much right now to ship goods," said Brown. "You will see price inflation because the price of moving things is going up."

This means that the reason food is harder to get ahold of now isn't because there isn't food, it means that it's harder to get that food from where it is to where people want it.

"There's tons and tons of ships that are just... trying to get into America right now," said Brown. "One thing that's not understood broadly is where everything goes to be processed."

Something that doesn't seem to be well understood is how much of imports to America were at one point exports from the same place, as Brown says:

"We'll actually grow food in America, send it to China to be processed -- meaning cut up, canned, boiled -- and then it's shipped back to America," said Brown. "Because it's actually cheaper for us to take stuff we grow and send it to the Chinese to process then ship it back than it is to do it domestically."

But, as mentioned before, the prices of transporting the goods back to the US have shot up exponentially. There are hundreds of ships that are bottlenecked at the ports, unable to dock and unable to be unloaded. There are not enough people working to get the goods off or on. And as such, they fail to be delivered. And that stagnation of goods is what is creating such a backup of everything around the world.

"Getting stuff out of America isn't as hard as it is to get stuff into America," said Brown. And when it's hard to get stuff back into America, problems arise at a concerning rate.

"The bottom line is there is still food, but it's complicated getting it here," said Brown. "So that's why you have, in school lunches, maybe mandarin oranges are on the menu and then you don't get them. Because mandarin oranges might be sitting on a cargo ship, might be sitting in a factory somewhere."

While there is no evidence of a broad sweeping, imminent worldwide famine or drought of food to come, there's also absolutely no chance that things will resolve quickly.

"It's going to persist into '22, no question," said Brown, further cementing the fact. The large scale on which the supply chain and food supply chain has been slowed and impacted is beyond an easily handled magnitude. Prices are expected to rise and food availability may be expected to lower as the shortage drags on in the aftermath of the pandemic.

This does not mean an impending food apocalypse, but it does mean it would do well to be aware of the forthcoming long-term effects this shortage will have on inflammation, the economy, and availability of products around the world and for the individual. Even in school cafeterias. •

SILVER LININGS: THE GOOD TO COME OUT OF THE PANDEMIC

JACOB BUNDY, STAFF WRITER

It's easy to see the pain and challenges the COVID pandemic has caused. It's harder to see the good that's come. But it's there.

It is easy for us as humans to be divisive. We oftentimes see people wanting to cause contention among those with differing opinions, beliefs, etc. However, the pandemic has, to some, helped unify people in a unique way. Which is certainly a good thing to see. People have come together in spite of a variety of differences and disagreements.

"Although many people may have cultural or political differences, it seems like the country as a whole has one common goal," said Teagan Auman, a Lincoln East senior. "That goal is to move on from Covid in the fastest and safest way possible," Auman remarked.

Now don't get too excited. Just because some feel that the pandemic has unified us in a way doesn't mean that people will never have contentious arguments over a controversial issue ever again. But the pandemic

puts into perspective that we are all humans, and rather than fighting with each other, we can always fight through our troubles together. One aspect of fighting through our troubles together has to do with service. Helping others at all times is important.

"Pandemic or not, as a citizen who enjoys the freedoms of living in this country, it's my obligation to help others if I can," said English teacher, Stephen Swinehart. "In my worldview, responsibility and freedom walk hand in hand; they cannot be separated."

Part of being a good citizen is definitely being ready to lend a helping hand to our fellow citizens. The pandemic has helped many realize their roles as citizens and the attributes of being a good citizen. Through the pandemic many have felt an obligation to serve others, and that is a good thing.

Additionally, some have felt that they have grown

closer with loved ones throughout the stages of the pandemic.

"One good thing that I've seen is families have had to spend more time together," Auman said. "In the initial stages of Covid I saw quite a few families, including my own, grow closer together."

Being surrounded by family members, everyday, for multiple months, can certainly bring families together in ways not seen before. On a less sentimental level, technology has seen greater use, which can be seen as a positive. Technology is being used more widely day by day. This pandemic has made it possible for us to get more in



tune with technology and how we can use it to benefit us. Through the past year and a half, technology has made many things more accessible for us. This was taken note of by Lizzy Acker, a writer for The Oregonian in her article, “6 surprisingly good things that came out of the pandemic that we should never change” published in June 2021.

“While Zoom fatigue is real, the switch to all virtual events allowed people who frequently can’t attend because of disability, distance, or other reasons to show up and be part of all kinds of things. Why can’t we just make everything both physical and virtual from here on out?”

Everything certainly does seem more accessible now, meetings and gatherings can be done over Zoom

"IT'S MY OBLIGATION TO HELP OTHERS IF I CAN. IN MY WORLDVIEW, RESPONSIBILITY AND FREEDOM WALK HAND IN HAND; THEY CANNOT BE SEPERATED."

with the press of a button. Another positive to come out of the pandemic is opportunity, and how we look at it.

“I think one positive that has come from the pandemic is that some people are more willing to pursue opportunities,” said senior Dylan Filipi. “After being limited from doing much for a long period of time, people will take any opportunity to do something.”

It’s definitely good to see people be more willing to take advantage of opportunities that come their way. One thing that the past year and a half has taught us is how important opportunities are and how opportunity can come and go.

Whether it’s more unification among citizens, technology being used to better the

world around us, or people taking advantage of opportunities, there are many positives to come out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, these silver linings don’t resolve the many problems the pandemic has brought us.

“Covid-19 has taken the lives of over 700,000 persons in the United States. With that in mind, it’s hard to find a silver lining in this pandemic,” said Swinehart. “I’m at a loss for words as to how to comfort anybody who has lost family members and friends to Covid-19.”

However, seeing the good COVID has brought out has been enough to help us hold our heads up a little during these difficult times.

“From the microcosm of teaching at East during this bleak period, I can say that my colleagues and my students have given me a lift many times over when the days felt somewhat insurmountable,” Swinehart said. •



EVERYTHING IS FINE...

WORD SEARCH

I	N	T	R	O	V	E	R	T	E	D	I	D	O
R	O	A	T	I	S	H	O	R	T	A	G	E	B
I	I	A	P	S	P	F	Y	E	N	T	P	S	E
O	T	S	S	N	A	D	T	X	L	H	E	P	L
T	A	C	C	E	T	D	I	T	T	Y	R	I	I
F	L	O	I	S	N	A	T	R	A	P	S	R	E
E	O	P	T	I	S	V	N	O	N	N	O	I	F
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L	D	G	O	A	A	P	I	R	I	E	L	A	R
N	R	V	P	M	L	V	T	T	V	O	I	L	R
E	R	Y	I	R	T	T	E	E	O	A	T	I	T
E	L	I	F	O	H	P	D	D	C	S	Y	T	I
I	D	N	E	N	G	R	A	D	E	S	P	Y	Y

beliefs
extroverted
health
isolation

politics
spirituality
coping
fear

identity
normal
shortage
covid

grades
introverted
personality
spartans

STAFF CONTRIBUTORS



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cady blackstock



ava bartels



brisa odenthal



hailey anderson



izzy apel



devon beechley



sabrina benford



kylie brown



jacob bundy



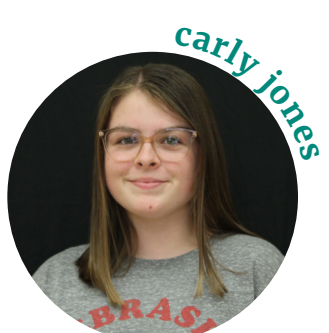
emery erikson



vanessa garcia thomas



elliott grant



carly jones



anika keese



hope shortridge



peyton svihela



jada vogel



Mrs. Geldmeier



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THE ORACLE

**EVERYTHING
IS FINE**

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NOT**

