



Alyssa Krogstrand

2017-2018 SDSCA President,

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T.F. Riggs High School, Pierre

SDSCA

The mission of the South Dakota School Counselor Association is to unite, support, and empower school counselors.

Our Vision:

The South Dakota School Counselor Association supports and unites school counselors through advocacy, leadership, and collaboration. SDSCA empowers our members through professional development opportunities, ethical support, and resources to promote student success in the academic, career, and social/emotional domains.

My Hope for September

By: Alyssa Krogstrand

As I am writing my article for School Counselors in South Dakota this month, I can't help but think of those counselors dealing with significant areas of trauma and tragedy. When we turn on the news or look at a news feed, we all too often hear about devastation: everything from hurricanes, fires, flooding, violence, the list goes on. It reminds me that now more than ever we have such an important job as School Counselors. We get to be the positive support for many students who come to school with trauma and tragedy in their lives. We must remember to not only help those who are immediately in need, but to also thank those close to us and show them how much we care for them through our words and actions. The month of September is a time that I often reflect on how life is short and we are never guaranteed a tomorrow. September is also proclaimed as Self-Improvement Month where we as counselors are encouraged to take time to improve ourselves. I encourage each of you to take the time to set goals helping you make yourself a better "you."

Now that the school year is into a 'routine' we can find it easy to forget to take time for others and more importantly ourselves. I want to encourage each of us to take at least 10 minutes every day to do something that brings us joy. My personal focus will be to achieve this joy and self-improvement in finding constructive and creative ways to bring joy to others. My hope is to find someone to thank, or 'catch someone being good' and compliment them for their work - whether that be a student, fellow counselor, administrator, parent or as simple as a special thank you to our custodial staff for keeping our building in great condition! "If you want to change the world, start with yourself."

Have a great September!

Alyssa

It's Not Too Late...

September 29th, SDCA presents "A Day with Dr. Russell Barkely". This is your opportunity to learn from one of the world's leading experts on ADHD.

[Click here for information.](#)

[Click here to register.](#)



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AND MORE!

Suicide Prevention in the Schools

By: Anna Eidem

Senate Bill 129, passed by the 2016 Legislature, requires anyone applying for an initial or renewal certificate as a teacher, administrator or other education professional to participate in a minimum of one clock hour of suicide awareness and prevention training. This requirement began July 1, 2017. This is a needed training for all of us and the passage of this bill is a step in the right direction. Statistically, suicide is still very prevalent in our state and beyond. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States and South Dakota is ranked 7th in the nation in deaths by suicide. Each year, over 44,000 people die by suicide and many of them are our students. The number one cause of death for children aged 10-14 is suicide in South Dakota.

Unfortunately, many of us have been touched by suicide whether through our family, friends or in our schools. For every death by suicide, there are 25 attempts. While this data is the most accurate we have, we estimate the numbers to be higher. Stigma surrounding suicide leads to underreporting and data collection methods critical to suicide prevention need to be improved.

How can School Counselors help in suicide prevention in our schools? What is our responsibility as a School Counselor when it comes to suicide prevention? Ethically, we are held to standards when it comes to breaking confidentiality with our students. We have a duty to report when a student is having suicidal ideations, but we must first build the trust with our students in order for them to come to us when they are feeling this way. In my experience, students will tell me that they won't go to an adult because they don't trust them or they are afraid of getting their friend in trouble. Here's where prevention comes to play (and we all would rather prevent suicide than deal with the aftermath of a suicide).

School policy is one way we can prevent suicide. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention found here: <https://afsp.org/our-work/education/model-school-policy-suicide-prevention/> gives educators and school administrators a comprehensive way to implement suicide prevention policies in their local community. In collaboration with the American School Counselor Association, the National Association of School Psychologists, and the Trevor Project, the program is research based and easily adaptable for middle and high schools. There are specific, actionable steps to support school personnel; sample language for student handbooks; suggestions for involving parents and guardians in suicide prevention; and guidance for addressing in-school suicide attempts.

AFSP also has a guide for what to do if your school experiences a suicide found here: <https://afsp.org/our-work/education/after-a-suicide-a-toolkit-for-schools/>. I hope you never have to use this, but, if you do, it will guide you in the aftermath of a suicide loss. This is a practical resource to schools facing real-time crises in diverse populations and communities; resources found in the Toolkit include managing crisis response, helping students cope, working with the community, memorialization, social media, suicide contagion and engaging external resources for support.

This month is suicide prevention awareness month and I hope you take the time to review what you can do about suicide prevention in your schools. This is a time for us to share resources and stories, as well as promote suicide prevention awareness.



SDSCA Counselor
Connections
Co-Chair

School Counselor
Tea Area Middle
School

Anna Eidem

Mark Your Calendar:

- ◆ **September 29th**– SDCA presents “A Day with Dr. Russell Barkley” in Sioux Falls. [Click here for the agenda](#) or visit the [SDCA Website](#) to register.
- ◆ **November 3rd & 4th**– SDSCA presents the 9th Annual Counselor Connections Workshop in Brookings. [Click here to register.](#)
- ◆ **February 2nd**– SDCA Day on the Hill in Pierre. Look for details coming soon about this advocacy opportunity with state lawmakers.
- ◆ **February 5th-9th**– National School Counseling Week! Start planning to celebrate and advocate for you, your program, and the profession by [clicking here to visit ASCA's NSCW page!](#)
- ◆ **April 19th-21st**– 2018 SDCA Conference in Pierre. More information coming soon to the [SDCA Website](#).
- ◆ **April 26th-29th**– 2018 ACA Conference in Atlanta, GA. For more information or to register, please [click here](#).
- ◆ **July 14th-17th**– 2018 ASCA Conference in Los Angeles, CA. Details coming soon!

[Click an Event for Details](#)

- [Sept. 23 in Box Elder](#)
- [Sept. 23 in Sioux Falls](#)



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Dustin Pickrel

SDSCA Graduate Student Liaison

School Counselor
May Overby Elementary School,
Aberdeen



Membership Changes

Membership in SDCA and its branches formerly ran the fiscal year of July 1st– June 30th. However, memberships are now good for a full calendar year. For example, if you joined SDCA, SDSCA, and your local chapter on August 30th 2017, your memberships would last until August 29th, 2018! Don't miss out on all the wonderful benefits being a member of your professional organizations offer you. [Click here](#) to join or renew your SDSCA, SDCA, or other memberships today!

Contact SDCA Executive Director Rebecca Christiansen if you have questions about your membership:
sdca.counseling@gmail.com

Burnout: Life as a Counselor

By: Dustin Pickrel

I learned very quickly what burnout was. It didn't take me more than a few weeks at my first job to find out just how mentally grueling our profession is. Boy was I taken off guard. Coming out of graduate school you feel like you're prepared to take on the world faster than Leo DiCaprio when he claimed king of it on the Titanic. Only to find out the world is undefeated and it also has student loan debt as its side kick. Counseling may not be considered a physically demanding job (I beg to differ some days) but for what it lacks in a physical capacity it makes up for ten fold in the mental aspect.

You never really realize just how much you are using your brain on a daily basis until you go to reach for something up there and poof....brainfart. Suddenly, you've forgotten your SAT binder on the gym floor because Johnny had a meltdown over what color "X" he had to sit on today. Or maybe you're like me and abruptly realize you've left your classroom counseling materials on the complete opposite end of the school from a lesson earlier that day. "Excuse me class....I've lost my mind today. Please hold while I run find it." Hey, it happens to the best of us. Whether you run 18 classrooms a week, hold 6 social skills groups a day, sit in endless hours of meetings, or are just simply preparing for the next fire you have to put out, we've all been mentally drained at some point. It's that "where's the Tylenol and why is my coffee cold?" feeling. Brutal.

As I prepared for another school year I kept telling myself "you've got to cut something out this year. How can I expect to be a good counselor if I can hardly keep afloat?" But another year comes and I find myself stretching thin again, thin like my \$1 batman dress socks. I think it's our nature to be pushed to the emotional brink. We are helpers, how do we say no when someone throws up the bat symbol? Well...sorry commissioner Gordon, hard pass on this mission. The Dark Knight eventually recognized even *he* needed a break. That's where we need to be cautious. Being a great counselor doesn't mean you are expected to do everything for everyone at every moment. Who looks after your needs if you do? Be cognizant of your own mental health before you try to look after someone else's.

What do you do to help keep yourself mentally sharp? Are there tricks you've learned as the years go by? If anyone has a good recipe to say "no" once in a while, hit me up. I'd love to try it. But for now, I'll stick to my same method of taking out a hard days work on some poor 50 year old dad in my city basketball league. Nothing cures the mental fatigue like hitting some 3's on a guy twice your age. Whatever you enjoy doing that keeps yourself fresh for your students, whether it is reading, running, crafting, or any other healthy escape, do it and do it as much as you can. Your students will thank you for it.

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US ON:**

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Save the date

for the 9th Annual

Counselor Connections Workshop

November 3rd & 4th
at SDSU



South Dakota
School Counselor Association

UNITE, SUPPORT, EMPOWER

Counselor Connections 2017

SDSCA is pleased to present the 9th annual Counselor Connections Workshop, November 3rd and 4th on the SDSU Campus in Brookings! Counselor Connections is a professional development event presented by school counselors, for school counselors. [Click here to register today!](#)

We are excited to announce that Carl "Energizer" Olson will be conducting an extended break-out session on Friday November 3rd. Carl, a former school counselor and national speaker, returns to South Dakota to share his unique blend of education and engagement. You can learn more about him or have Mr. Olson visit your school community by visiting his website:

energizerolson.com



SDSCA has secured a block of rooms at the MyPlace Hotel in Brookings for \$89/night. MyPlace will honor the SD State rate if you are eligible. Call (605) 696-3150 to book your room before they are gone! Registration will be opening soon.

We hope you are able to join us in November!

Best Practice Share Sessions

The SD Department of Education is sponsoring sessions that allow school counselors to share their best practices and walk away with: tools for comprehensive programs, lesson plans, advocacy ideas, and more!

To register for the Sioux Falls session (October 12th, 9:00-3:00) [click here](#).

To register for the Rapid City session (October 19th, 9:00-3:00) [click here](#).

Registration is **FREE** and you can earn up to 5 Continuing Education (CE) contact hours.

Attendees **MUST** submit a classroom guidance lesson plan at least one week before the session to Andrea Diehm (andrea.diehm@state.sd.us) and must be willing to present your lesson on site.

Questions can also be sent to Andrea Diehm.

Friday Forums

Avera Behavioral Health in Sioux Falls, is once again presenting their Friday Forum series, featuring "behavioral health topics for school professionals".

Sessions take place in the Avera Behavioral Health Center gym (4400 West 69th Street) starting at 2:00 pm CST and take place once a month from October through April.

Aren't close to Sioux Falls? No problem. DDN sites can participate by contacting Avera at least 48 hours in advance.

The first session, "Addressing Emotional Needs of Children on the Autism Spectrum", takes place on **October 27th**.



For more details and the schedule of sessions, please [click here to visit our website](#).

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School Counselor Spotlight



Kendra Hotchkiss
Centerville School District;
SDSCA K-12 Vice President

How long have you been a school counselor?: Going on four years.

What do you see as the biggest issues currently facing school counselors?: Perhaps not the biggest issue but: The caseloads of many counselors is something concerning— how can one counselor possibly reach 400 plus students alone? Yet this is on the low side of many counselor’s caseloads. The caseloads alone are tough, but when added with the ‘other duties’ that are assigned on top of this, it makes it tough to maintain both the counseling caseload and the tasks associated with ‘other duties’.

What advice would you give to anyone new to the profession?: Reach out to others in this profession— lean on each other. It is always so much better to have others to grow with! Also, find a way to self care. This was the hardest part when starting out for me, I didn’t realize just how important it was for me to care for myself as well—”you can’t pour from an empty cup”!!

Is there anything else you’d like us to know about your program?: I started this program from nothing. There was no prior counseling program in place in 10 years prior to my position being added. It was tough being a brand new counselor and trying to build something, especially not having much experience to build it off of. I reached out to others and found help and continued to learn what was best— it was hard, but the best things don’t typically come easy. I learned that what is best for this school may not be for the next school I go to, but I built something to last. I was extremely blessed to have this school allow me to build and rebuild and adjust to find what worked best for us and to build the best program. I was even more blessed to find a school that sees the true value in our job and program.

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SDSCA Mentor Program

Are you new to the school counseling profession or new to South Dakota? Apply to participate in SDSCA’s Mentor Program by [clicking here](#). This membership benefit can help connect you with an experienced school counselor who can share wisdom, resources, and experience with you!

If you are interested in serving as a mentor, please [click here](#).

Questions? Contact Mentoring Chair Danielle Schonebaum at: Danielle.Schonebaum@k12.sd.us

SD School Psychologist of the Year

Honor a deserving school psychologist by nominating them for South Dakota’s School Psychologist of the Year Award. For details, please visit our website by [clicking here](#).

Nominations are due by September 22nd!

Did You Know...

School counselor confidentiality is covered by South Dakota Codified Law 19-19-508.1 [Read it here!](#)

School Counselor Spotlight con't



Kathy Blaha
Avon School District

How long have you been a school counselor?: 11 years.

Who are your role models?: Sr. Candy Crystal– she presented educational theory but grounded it in the real world. She taught me the importance of being human and allowing students to see that as well. Additionally, she set high expectations and demonstrated the value of a positive role model.

What advice would you give to anyone new to the profession?: Don't be afraid to ask questions and get involved! The professional development as well as support are keys to success.

Is there anything else you'd like us to know about you?: This year I have accepted the position of K-12 principal in the Avon District so am switching hats. I truly feel that the skills and experiences I gained as a school counselor will serve me well in this position and allow me to better serve those in the district as well.

Shanna Martin
Timber Lake High School

How long have you been a school counselor?: This is my 4th year.

Why do you enjoy being a school counselor?: I love the moments when a student makes a big realization or self improvements of any size. It's those "proud moments" or "light bulb" moments that make the tough days worth it.

What do you see as the biggest issues currently facing school counselors?: I think the variety that makes every day different and exciting also creates challenges, especially while wearing our many hats in today's world.

What advice would you give to anyone new to the profession?: Reach out to others and ask the questions that you feel silly asking! Nobody started their career with 20 years of knowledge and experience. Expect to make mistakes, but learn from them just like we want students to learn from their mistakes.



NEXT MONTH:

Our ASCA partnered newsletter explores how counselors team with their community to best serve students.

There is no health
without mental health.

David Satcher