

Ten Minute T(ea) with Ms. Andrea Heinze

*Interview conducted by Tramie Tran, Tyler Gallant, and Justin Alvino
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Q) Do you think that mental health issue is something that impacts the student body at Brooks?

A) To some degree yes, I do not have statistics, but I do know there are students who suffer from depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues, and who may even take medications for their conditions. I think issues such as stress, homesickness, and eating disorders are prominent issues in adolescents.

Q) Are mental health issues something you see as significant challenges for a large number of students or do you think it's overblown?

A) I don't think it's overblown. There are students who face real challenges with mental health issues; some students may not be willing to talk about it. I think that there are real life issues that emerge in teenage years, particularly for students being away from home for the first time. All students and adults at points in their lives will feel stress, anxiety, sadness, etc that they will likely work through. However, there are times when one can't work through it, and it becomes an obstacle to their way of life. When these situations become debilitating and unable to engage, that's when I think it's more of a mental health issues.

Q) How do you think modern day standards from society and the media impact adolescents' lives?

A) I think it's hard. There are a lot of pressures put on adolescents these days created by our society and are emphasized by the media. Technology has significantly influenced some of these pressures with the real time sharing that comes with the technology. There is this pressure to present your "perfect selves" when you are Snapping, Instagramming, Facebooking etc. There is this message that comes from the media telling you that you have to be perfect, beautiful and you have to fit these narrow images of masculinity and femininity. There's more and more pressure for adolescents to be the best they can be: to get into the best colleges, to reach this 'ideal image, ideal person, ideal sense of success' that really aren't real, realistic or easily attainable.

Q) What are often the sources reasons behind these mental health issues?

A) Mental health issues can be caused by chemical/biological imbalances or spurred by events that occur in one's life. Some mental health issues can be treated with counseling and other therapeutic methods, while others require medication in addition to the therapy.

Q) What role do you play at school in supporting adolescents suffering from mental health issues?

A) I hope that I establish relationships with kids so that when things are or are not going well, the students are open to share their difficulties and ask for help. From here we would tap into resources to further support the students.