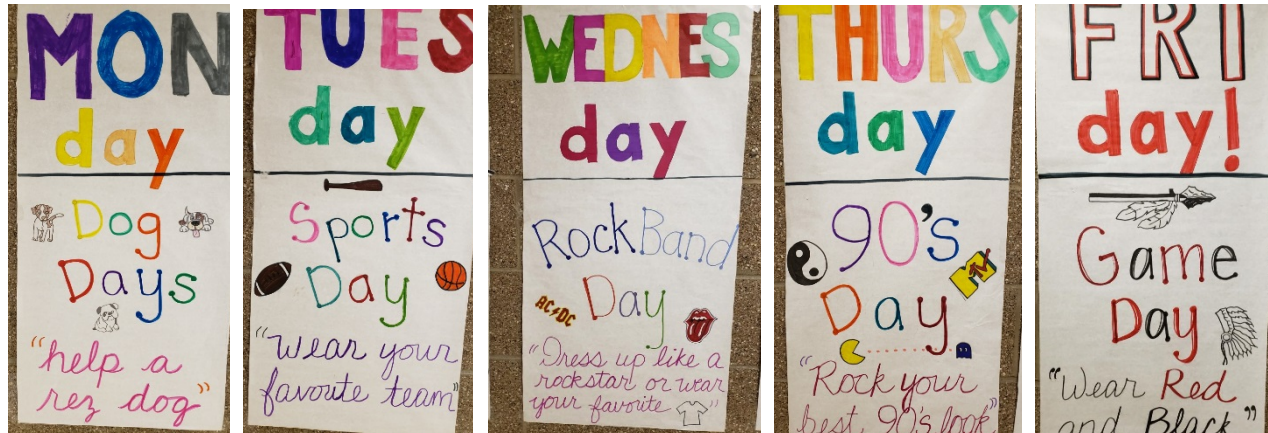


Buffalo Hide Academy: September 2019

BHA has the Spirit (Week)

Buffalo Hide Academy is celebrating Homecoming Week and we want to thank our students for showing the initiative to put their own spin on the themes and for creating the decorations that line our halls!



New Year, New Books, New Curriculum

Buffalo Hide Academy has had several books donated to us this month and we are in the midst of building new curriculum that is engaging and relevant for our students. Among the many new titles are **An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States**, **Trickster**, **There There**, and **The Marrow Thieves**. These books will be used in our English, US History, and Digital Storytelling classes. We have also received additional copies of **Maus** and **Persepolis**, both of which have already had Google Classrooms built that allow us to provide service to students that are out of the building for one reason or another. We can send a copy with them and, as long as they are able to connect to the internet, can keep working towards graduation.



Sexual Trauma:

Charlie Speicher and Chris Lewis attended a two-day workshop hosted by the Montana Childwise Institute to help students affected by sexual trauma achieve post-traumatic growth. Below is a summary of the conference.

The impact of sexual trauma on children and adolescents has been well researched. However, much remains to be learned about fostering post traumatic growth for victims of abuse in the clinical/educational setting. Sexual abuse, which includes contact and non-contact forms, is any unwanted or unsolicited sexual behavior being perpetrated against an individual.

At the Buffalo Hide Academy, we recognize that many of our students deal with or have dealt with sexual abuse in their families. All hyperbole aside, sexual abuse is an epidemic in Indian country as most incidents of abuse, rape, and sexual assault don't get reported. Sexual trauma is intimately connected with other public health issues in Browning, (historical/contemporary trauma, family violence, substance abuse, mental illness, poverty, etc.) and it is absolutely critical that we as a school community create a safe space to begin addressing this issue. Sexual abuse can completely derail and consume the life of victims, and if we don't talk about it at school, we are further isolating vulnerable people while sending the message that *it is not okay to talk about sexual abuse. This message needs to stop.*

Key take-away's from Impact of Sexual Trauma conference:

1. Sexual abuse is common: 1 in 4 girls will be sexually abused by the time they turn 18, 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused by the time they turn 18 (there is a problem of underreporting for males - this could have cultural implications in terms of masculinity, but it could also be due to social stigma regarding homosexuality as most perpetrators are male)
2. The average number of victims for sexual abuse perpetrators is astronomically high! 300-400 victims seems to be the aggregate. The identification and prosecution of sexual predators has an extremely low success rate.
3. Higher rates of reporting of sexual abuse occur when there is some type of physical injury. Reporting tends to happen at a higher rate also when victims see other loved ones being victimized.
4. The term grooming is the blurring of physical and emotional boundaries with the intent to sexually abuse. Grooming behavior is typically slow and incremental to decrease alarm bells, desensitize victims to sexual activity, and to normalize deviant behavior. Examples of grooming could be gifts and attention, isolating child, sexual jokes, offender sharing personal information, victim and offender engaging in activity victim could "get in trouble for."
5. Secrets: offenders can "test" their victims ability to keep secrets by first asking benign information to be concealed from caregivers. As secrets build, offender instills in victim the importance of "keeping secrets."
6. Vulnerability is essentially the key feature in all victims.
7. Why children don't report: fear of the perpetrator, fear of "getting in trouble", fear of losing relationships, fear of families breaking up.....threats from perpetrator, fear they won't be believed, attachment (trauma bonding), shame and guilt, etc.
8. Impact of abuse: reality bending experience, a loss of safety (this world is dangerous), negative self-perception (sex stuff is what's good about me), altered sense of perpetrator, and by

extension dysfunctional relationships, alterations in systems of meaning, dissociation.....long term toxic stress and the associated fallout.

As clinicians and educators that work with sexual abuse, self-restoration is key. Mirror neurons in our brain can essentially create the same trauma experience in our bodies that our clients experience. Thus, client transference is a hazard that must be mitigated.

That being said, one of our fundamental beliefs at BHA is that the more we know about trauma and its impact on survivors, the more we need to learn to be able to effectively respond to those traumas. Our mission, as always, is to create a safe and supportive school environment where our students can raise these critical issues with us to begin the healing process.

We'll continue to seek out cutting edge professional development opportunities in the world of trauma and abuse to augment our skills and abilities in our efforts to help vulnerable students.

