

## Putting Self-Care Into Practice

Like secondary school counselors around the world, the three counselors who serve on the [National CCAA Board of Directors](#) faced the uncertainty and stresses of finishing the end of the school year remotely and are currently navigating the uncertain and ever changing return to classes this fall. The stress levels of counselors, students, teachers and families are at an all-time high.

We asked our three board members how they put self-care into practice while working from home in the spring--and what lessons they learned while working from home that will help as they spend the summer preparing for school to start in the fall:

Megan Diefenbach, College Counselor at Holy Names Academy (Seattle, WA) began working from home in early March and shared that she quickly had to get creative and find new ways to stay connected with her students and families. In the spring she learned to host virtual office hours during school days which she said allowed students “to ‘stop by my office’ with any casual questions -- before school, during break and lunch, and after school.”

All three counselors found it was helpful--and necessary--to find ways to unplug from their jobs while working from their home offices. Leigh Jackson, College Counselor at Assumption High School (Louisville, KY) shared: “Just as I would when I left the school building each day, I had to leave my home office each day and tell myself that whatever might be waiting for me could really wait until the next morning.”

As the return to school in the fall approaches, we know it will look different than any other year, even if you are back in your office at school. As she prepares for classes to start and what may become the “new normal,” Norma Gutierrez, Director of College Counseling at Saint Thomas Academy (Mendota Heights, MN) shared how she plans to approach her position in the fall: “flexibility is key. Try to be creative when it comes to programming and how to interact with students and families.”

Other suggestions our counselors had to help you unplug and try to relax as you enjoy what’s left of the summer:

- Get outside; go for walks or bike rides
- Have a virtual coffee or happy hour with colleagues, family or friends
- Learn to find joy in the small things
- Read a new book
- Be kind--kind to others and kind to yourself