



YFS Counselors In Every School

Our Mental Health Counselors work collaboratively with students, families and school staff to meet the social and emotional needs of students in every school.

Counselors provide confidential counseling, parent and staff consultation and age-specific groups and clubs.

Mental Health Counselors in Elementary Schools

Services include Student Support Groups: Friendship, social skills, divorce and grief & loss; Social-Emotional Classroom Education: Mindfulness, Kelso's Choice, Playground Mentors, Second Step Bullying Prevention, stress management and friendship skills; Student Activities: Peer mediation, New Student Lunch Groups, Second Step bullying prevention, and Friendship Groups; and Individual Student Counseling and Parent Support/Consultation. **Telemental health services available.**



**Anna Fenster, LMHCA
Northwood**
206.275.5841
Email: Anna.Fenster@
mercerislandschools.org



**Julie Mattson, MSW, LICSW
Lakeridge**
206.230.6019
Email: Julie.Mattson@
mercerislandschools.org



**Joy Cain, LMFT, ATR
Island Park**
206.230.6284
Email: Joy.Cain@
mercerislandschools.org



**Alina Samko, LMFTA
West Mercer**
206.236.3438
Email: Alina.Samko@
mercerislandschools.org

Mental Health Counselors at Islander Middle School

Services include:

- Student Support Groups: Living with Divorce, Options to Anger, Peer Relationships, Boys Council and Girls Friendship Groups
- Student Activities: Sources of Strength Peer Leadership, SOS Outreach Program, Peer Mediation, Girl's Empowerment Group and WEB Leadership
- Substance Abuse Prevention: Red Ribbon Week
- Classroom Education: Second Step Bullying Prevention
- Individual Counseling and Support (**Telemental Health available**)



**Kayla Bocek
Islander Middle School**
206.230.6154
Kayla.Bocek@
mercerislandschools.org



**Katie Spencer, LICSW
Islander Middle School**
206.230.6272
Katie.Spencer@
mercerislandschools.org

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counselors at Mercer Island High School

Services include:

- Individual Counseling and Support (**Telemental Health available**)
- Youth Leadership Programs: Forefront Suicide Prevention, Peer Educators, Student Club Support, and Minds Matter and S.A.F.E. Clubs
- Substance Abuse Services: Prevention, Assessment, Intervention, Referral, Support, Re-entry and Parent Support and Education
- New Students: Orientation and Individual Support
- Classroom Education: Mental Health awareness and Substance Abuse Prevention



**Caleb Visser, LHMC, MACP
R&R Place
Mercer Island High School**
206.236.3290
Caleb.Visser@
mercerislandschools.org



**Chris Harnish, BA, CC, CPP, SUDP
Substance Abuse Specialist
Mercer Island High School**
206.236.3363
Chris.Harnish@
mercerislandschools.org

How to Connect to your YFS School Counselor

What Youth and Family Services Counselors Do

Youth and Family Services (YFS) counselors are City of Mercer Island employees working out of Mercer Island School District (MISD) schools. There is one YFS counselor in each of the elementary schools, two in the middle school, and two in the high school. YFS counselors are licensed or certified mental health providers located in the schools to reduce barriers to students accessing services and can help with individual and family issues related to school readiness, child development, social skills, family conflict, mental health, and substance use. YFS counselors assess personal or school problems and find solutions using formal counseling or informal supports while acting as advocates for your student's mental health and wellness. There is no fee for YFS individual mental health counseling services.

How Does My Child Meet the Counselor?

All MISD students can self-refer in the school building and parents can call YFS counselors directly to request support. Teachers or administrators sometimes refer students as well. YFS counselors often visit classrooms to teach social-emotional skills or topics related to mental health or substance abuse prevention (depending on grade level). No counseling is ever mandatory.

How do Student-Counselor Meetings Work?

YFS counselors meet with students in classroom settings, individually in their office, or in small groups. Group meetings can be with students with similar issues, such as divorce or family illness. Counselors often come into the classroom to teach subjects that affect everyone, such as mental health education, conflict resolution, emotional regulation, etc. By request, students can receive individual mental health counseling during the school day (meetings coordinated to minimize academic disruption).

How Confidential Are School Counseling Services?

YFS individual mental health counseling is confidential between the counselor and the child and parent (youth 13 and older must sign a release for parent involvement in formal counseling per state law). School counselors and school district staff can coordinate when allowed by rules of confidentiality, and students or parents can give additional permissions as indicated. Exceptions to confidentiality include cases where student safety is involved, such as risk of personal harm, harm of others, and neglect or abuse.

Youth & Family Services Counselors:

YFS is a department of the City of Mercer Island. For additional information, contact YFS at (206) 275-7657 or miyfs@mercerisland.gov.