

PATH

Providing Access to Healing



Jake, 7th Grade Student

Jake: I hate going to school because everyone looks at me and it seems like they are judging me. I'm nervous around the other kids. My only friend moved away, and now I don't have anyone at school who likes me. I don't even want to leave my house.

Jake's Mom: My son has always tended towards being shy and unsure of others. I really started to notice a change though when Adam, his closest friend, moved away. Lately, he just comes home after school and goes to his room to play video games. He used to talk to me and let me know about his day, and I'm just not sure if he's being a normal teenager or I should be more concerned.

Jake: My school counselor says I should talk to a lady who comes to school every week called a PATH counselor. My mom thinks it's a good idea because she's tired of fighting with me about going to school, and she doesn't like seeing me so sad and worried all the time. I'm nervous, though, because I've never been to a counselor before. My mom and I thought about it once, but we can't afford it and she can't take that much time off work.

Jake's Mom: When Jake's school approached me about PATH, it was almost a relief to be told that my difficulties at home weren't imagined. I honestly wasn't sure if what we were experiencing at home was normal teenage hormones or something more. And frankly, even if I had thought a counselor might help, it would have been impossible to take time off from work to get him in to see someone.

Jake: I really like talking to my PATH counselor. She taught me some things I can do when I get nervous around other people. She helped me see that the other kids probably aren't really judging me all the time, and I should give them a chance. I guess I should give myself a chance too. I'm starting to do more stuff with other kids at school, and I think I'm starting to make some friends. I joined the Science Club, which is really great because there are other kids who like science as much as I do.



Becca, 12th Grade Student

Becca's Teacher: Becca, where do I start with Becca, I've been a teacher here for more than 10 years and have seen a lot of students like Becca come through. I first met Becca as a freshman and she was, I mean she still is, so bright. At that point she talked about wanting to go college for English and maybe becoming a teacher herself. Over the years though, she's just seemed to become uninterested in school, or her future. I've heard from other students there's trouble in her home, and I just really wish there was some way I could help her see past her current situation and help her dream about her possibilities again.

Becca: I'm sick of teachers asking me what I'm going to do after I graduate. All I know is that my parents couldn't care less one way or another. They're getting divorced and all they can think about is how much they hate each other. I'm not even on their radar. I just know I don't want to be anything like them.

Becca's Teacher: I had a chance to chat with our school counselor today about Becca, turns out she was already on his radar for a new program we're trying out, PATH. Apparently, we're able to have professional mental health counselors come in to the school for private counseling sessions. I really hope that Becca's parents agree to this opportunity. I know our school counselor has been trying to work with her too, but he's guiding more than 800 students, and granted not all of them need as much help as Becca, but I really think giving her a chance to sit down and just talk to someone new may really help her out.

Becca: There's this thing called PATH at school where you can talk to a counselor about your problems. My school counselor says I really should do it. Maybe if I do, everybody will get off my back.

Becca: It's been really good to talk about things with my PATH counselor. I've been walking around with a lot of hate and anger against my parents. After talking to my counselor every week, I realize I don't hate them, and they're just trying to do the best they can in a tough situation. I still get upset at my parents sometimes, but it's getting better. I've been so angry for so long that it feels really good to let that go. I can see now that it's important for me to make some plans for what I'll do after graduation. My PATH counselor helped me learn ways that I can talk to my parents about my future without fighting.



Allie, 3rd Grade:

Allie: I just came to this school this year because my dad died and my mom had to move. I miss him a lot, and I miss my friends, and I miss my old house. Sometimes I just start to cry at school even when I try hard not to. The other kids have been kind of mean to me and nobody wants to be my friend. I think sometimes that I just want to be with my dad.

Allie's Classmate: I tried talking to Allie on our first day of school. She was wearing a Moana t-shirt, and I loved that movie too – so I thought we'd maybe be able to sing the songs together during recess. She just said something about her dad taking her to the movie and then started crying. I guess she likes to cry, because she did it again during lunch the other day. Mom said I should be nice, but the other kids think Allie is too weird.

Allie: My mom and the school counselor want me to talk to another counselor that comes to my school. I saw her once, and she smiles a lot. I hope I like her because I really need a friend here.

Allie: This lady is called PATH. I think a path is a little road that takes you where you want to go. I'm glad, because I want things to be different. She's helping me learn how to make new friends. I never had to do that before because I never had to move before. I talk to her about my dad. She says it's OK that I miss him, but she's helping me to not be so sad all the time. Sometimes I cry when I talk to her, but I don't cry in my classroom anymore.

Allie's Classmate: Today, I brought in my Moana doll for show and tell, and Allie said she had the Maui doll at home. We got to talking and decided to ask our moms if we could get together and play some day after school. She's really nice, and has some fun toys at home to play with. She did tell me that the reason she gets sad sometimes is because her dad died. I'm not sure I understand what that's like, but Allie said a nice PATH lady is helping her to feel not so sad. That makes me happy, because Allie is pretty cool and I'm glad that PATH lady is helping her.

