

A LITTLE LOVE NOTE FROM YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD THERAPIST

"This month, may you remember: rest is not a reward for getting through the day. It's part of how we get through the day."

January 2026

Welcome back. January often asks a lot of students and staff. After the flexibility of winter break, everyone is expected to snap back into routines, expectations, and performance - often while energy is still low and motivation hasn't fully caught up yet.

This is a gentle check-in for this part of the school year.

For the Staff

This Month's Emotional Climate:

- Re-entry after winter break and schedule disruption
- Pushing through the final stretch of first semester
- Anticipation and pressure around midterms or standardized testing
- Winter fatigue: shorter days, less sunlight, lower energy

January often brings a quiet heaviness.
Not a crisis, but a steady mental load.

What You Might Notice:

- More exhaustion than expected, even after time off
- Increased mental clutter or difficulty focusing
- Shorter patience, with yourself or others
- A sense of "just getting through" the days

Try This:

- Choose **one** daily anchor (a walk, quiet cup of coffee, deep breaths between meetings)
- Lower the bar on productivity where possible. Steadiness matters more than speed
- Name the season for yourself: "This is a heavy month, and that's okay."

*You're not behind – **you're readjusting.***
Transitions, even familiar ones, use nervous system energy.

Small moments of regulation goes a long way right now.

For the Students

What They're Likely Feeling:

- Stress about grades, finals, or upcoming tests
- Difficulty shifting back to structure after break
- Winter blues: low motivation, irritability, emotional flatness
- Pressure to "start the year strong" without the energy to do so

Even students who look fine may feel overwhelmed internally.

How It Shows Up:

- Fatigue, headaches, stomachaches
- Increased anxiety or emotional sensitivity
- Withdrawal, irritability, or "checking out"
- Trouble concentrating or staying organized

How You Can Help:

- Focus on regulation before problem-solving. Calm down first, then think things through
- Help break tasks into smaller steps to reduce overwhelm
- Remind students that effort counts, even when motivation is low
- Normalize winter energy shifts without minimizing feelings

January is one of the hardest adjustment months of the school year. Needing time to readjust doesn't mean something is wrong.

Sometimes support looks like slowing things down.

Find More Support

If helpful, I share therapist-created tools and resources focused on emotional regulation, stress management, and decision-making skills for teens.

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