



An Open Letter to the 2018 Graduating Class of MSD

Graduation is taking place today, Sunday, June 3, nearly four months since the shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

South Florida psychologist, Dr. Dara Bushman, has been following this tragedy since February. She is an expert on human behavior, PTSD and coping after a violent episode.

The following is her open letter:

Dear students and parents,

I have great admiration and respect for the strength that has been demonstrated as a community to assure no school, community, parent, child, or person should ever have to live through the horrors as you.

No one can tell you how Sunday's graduation may or may not be for you. No one can describe or pretend to understand your reality. For some, there is much conflict and trepidation whether to attend graduation or not to attend.

Concern to move on and concern not to move on. Confusion whether to experience joy and move forward and confusion to continue to mull in utter misery and sadness,

as it has felt natural to grieve with internal fear to forgot or “let go” of the memories. As to “let go” may correlate to losing the battle of evil.

For some there will be promise. They will remember February 14, 2018 as an awful nightmare, yet their mind will be able to continue to move forward and be present in their active lives. They will now see through a deepened lease of gratitude and have greater appreciation for their freedom and value for life.

For others there will be pain. Pain so horrid and deep that their mind continuously questions whether yesterday day is still happening today. They will be left with confusion and an inability to focus on continued happiness or current conditions.

Whether one is experiencing pain or promise, there is no set pattern or proper way to move through this or heal. There is only “your way”.

How one person’s mind experiences circumstances and is internalized is completely different than the next. No one can tell you how to feel or how to think.

You will all cope as you have been, one moment at a time. You will continue to join forces collaboratively allowing your forces to join and strengths to multiple together.

Each one of you will cope just as you need to, each in your own way.

Stay #msdstrong



Dr. Dara Bushman

If you have questions for Dr. Dara you can send them to us, or directly to Dr. Dara:

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