



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK
MAY 1ST – 7TH, 2011
CHILDHOOD DEPRESSION AWARENESS DAY
MAY 3RD, 2011

Join Us this Year!

Wear a green ribbon during these observances.
It brings awareness to the needs of children with
emotional, behavioral, and social disabilities
and their families across New York State.

Why Green?

Back in the 1800s the color green was used to brand people who were labeled "insane". The children's mental health community decided to continue using the color green, but with a completely different focus. Green signifies new life, new growth, and new beginnings. Therefore, we wear the green ribbon to raise public awareness, better the lives of children with serious emotional disorders and show our support of these children and their families.

Sponsored by Families Together in NYS, Inc., VESID of NYS and the Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.

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CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH FACTS

Did you know...

...One in 10 children in the United States suffer from mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment and

...**only** one in five of these children receive specialty mental health services in any given year?

Did you know in New York State (using this national formula & statistics from the US Census 2000)...

...approximately 520,000 children have a serious enough emotional disturbance to cause some level of impairment and

...of these 520,000 children, **only** 104,000 children needing treatment are receiving mental health services at all in any given year?

Did you know that...

...suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15-24 year olds and

...it is the sixth leading cause of death for 5-15 year olds?

Did you know that...

...a survey conducted by the National Mental Health Association showed that **only** one third of Americans believe that children's mental health disabilities can be effectively treated and

...the treatment success rate for children's mental health disorders is 80%.?

Did you know...

...Seventy-four percent of students who drop out of school and who are categorized as seriously emotionally disabled are arrested within five years of dropping out and

...A student who drops out of school is more likely to go to prison than a smoker is likely to get cancer?

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SEEKING HELP

When to Seek Help

Parents and family members are usually the first to notice if a child has problems with emotions or behavior. Your observations with those of teachers and other caregivers may lead you to seek help for your child. If you suspect a problem or have questions, consult your pediatrician or contact a mental health professional.

The following signs may indicate the need for professional assistance or evaluation:

- decline in school performance
- poor grades despite strong efforts
- regular worry or anxiety
- repeated refusal to go to school or take part in normal children's activities
- rapidly changing mood swings
- sleeping too much or too little
- feelings of worthlessness
- recurring thoughts of suicide or death
- persistent nightmares
- persistent disobedience or aggression
- frequent temper tantrums
- depression, sadness or irritability
- hyperactivity or fidgeting

Fear & Anxiety

It's okay for children to feel afraid sometimes. Everyone is afraid of something at some point in their life. Fear and anxiety grow out of experiences that we do not understand. If your children have fears that will not go away and affect their behavior, the first step is to find out what is frightening them. Be loving, patient and reassuring, not critical. Remember: the fear may be very real to the child.

Signs of Fear

- nervous mannerisms, shyness, withdrawal and aggressive behavior may be signs of childhood fears.
- a change in normal eating and sleeping patterns may also signal an unhealthy fear. Children who "play sick" or feel anxious regularly may have some problems that need attention.
- fear of school can occur following a stressful event such as moving to a new neighborhood, changing schools, or after a bad incident at school.
- children may not want to go to school after a period of being at home because of an illness.

Where to seek help

Information and referrals regarding the types of services that are available for children may be obtained from:

- Families Together in NYS: 1-888-326-8644 or www.ftnys.org
- The Mental Health Association in New York State: 518-800-766-6177 or www.mhanys.org,
- child's pediatrician or school counselor
- community-based psychiatric care
- crisis outreach teams
- education or special education services
- family network organizations, family resource centers and/or support groups
- self-help and support groups

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ANTI-STIGMA: DO YOU KNOW THE FACTS?

Stigma is not just the use of the wrong word or action. Stigma is about disrespect. It is the use of negative labels to identify a person living with mental illness. Stigma is a barrier and discourages individuals and their families from getting the help they need due to the fear of being discriminated against.

Do you know that Stigma:

- Is not just the use of the wrong word or action?
- Is about disrespect, and that stigma is about the use of negative labels to identify a person living with mental illness?
- Is a barrier and discourages individuals and their families from getting the help they need due to shame and fear of discrimination?
- Results in inadequate insurance coverage for mental health services?
- Results in fear, mistrust, and violence against people living with mental illness?
- Results in families and friends turning their backs on people with mental illness?
- Keeps people from getting needed mental health services and that people would rather tell employers they have committed a petty crime and were in jail, than admit to being in a psychiatric hospital?

Anti-Stigma Do's & Don'ts:

Do's:

- **Do use** respectful language such as:
 - Person who has schizophrenia
 - Person with a psychiatric disability
 - Person with bipolar disorder
- **Do emphasize** abilities, not limitations.
- **Do tell** someone if they express a stigmatizing attitude.

Don'ts:

- **Don't portray** successful persons with disabilities as super human.
- **Don't use** generic labels such as retarded, or the mentally ill.
- **Don't use** terms like crazy, lunatic, manic-depressive, slow functioning, or normal.

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

• Every child's mental health is important • Many children have mental health problems • These problems are real, painful, and can be severe • Mental health problems can be recognized and successfully treated • By working together, caring families and communities can help!

*From a publication of National Mental Health Services Knowledge Exchange Network
www.mentalhealth.org*

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TEN TIPS FOR ORGANIZING
AN EFFECTIVE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

1. **Gather** a group of great people to make up your team. Include people who have shown dedication to the issue of children's mental health as well as people with lots of contacts and energy.
2. **Schedule** regular meetings and set goals early.
3. **Determine** what your message will be and to whom you will be sending the message; suggestion: everyone on your mailing list, local schools, county departments, community centers, hospitals, and pediatricians.
4. **Brainstorm** your ideas - ask the "Magic Wand Question" (What would you see happening if you had a magic wand and no obstacles?) No ideas are bad ideas.
5. **Prioritize** - as a group decide your priorities. Set these your goals and then discuss what steps (objectives) you need to take to accomplish those goals.
6. **Become task-centered** - break down the objectives and decide if an individual can manage it or if a team approach is needed. Then assign the tasks.
7. **Create a time line** and set up an e-mail distribution list to keep everyone updated on the progress.
8. **Spread the word** - utilize media outlets by sending press releases and directly contacting members of the media (TV and newspaper reporters and editors).
9. **Support** each other by performing follow-ups with participants. Encourage them to stay on target with the time line. If someone is having trouble with a task offer help.
10. **Participate in your Children's Mental Health Week activity**, and celebrate it at a follow-up meeting. Discuss how things went, what to improve on next year. Do not forget to set the date for your next planning meeting to begin the process for next year. Each year it gets easier!

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

THEME: "SHOW OUR CHILDREN THAT WE CARE"

Structured Educational Activities:

- Children's & Teens' Perspectives - discussions with them through drawings and stories.
- Workshops for parents, caregivers, and providers.
- Regional or local educational conferences.
- Special topic forums or roundtable discussions in the community.
- Mental Health Fairs with depression and anxiety screenings.
- Special topic high school assembly with speaker.
- Video presentations with discussion.
- School PA Announcements by students.

Informational Activities:

- Green ribbon awareness -- word of mouth is key!
- Childhood depression and anxiety screening held at community centers, clinics, hospitals, malls, etc.
- Information fairs.
- Seedling Project - each Legislative representative presented with a packet of information on children's mental health issues and a tree seedling as a reminder that we rely on them to help our children grow up healthy.
- Organization or support program open house.
- Public Service Announcements (PSAs).
- Write an Editorial or Letter to the Editor for you local newspaper.
- Brown bag lunch series on various learning disabilities, mental health diagnoses, community services, medication education, etc.

Artistic Expression/Recreational Activities with a Children's Mental Health Theme

- Essay and poster contests for children & youth.
- Puppet shows emphasizing sensitivity to disabilities.
- Teen or group art murals.
- Family Concert.
- "Express Yourself Tees"- t-shirts created by children/teens.
- Movie night...pick a movie that will bring sensitivity and understanding to a disability and follow with discussion.
- Open mike poetry session for teens and/or parents.
- Teen improvisational or theatre group show.
- Book reading contest...ask local/school library to display their collection of books on disabilities.
- "Be A Mentor Day" or "Be A Buddy Day"...encourage the internal assets of *caring* and *helping* individuals with disabilities through this activity.

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CHILDREN'S OR YOUTH ESSAY OR POSTER CONTEST

Why...

- We want to teach our children the values of caring, tolerance, responsibility, and sensitivity to others, in this case those with emotional and behavioral disabilities.
- Children tug at our heartstrings and teach us. What is the expression- "Out of the mouths of babes"?
- By heightening the awareness of our youth, we encourage youth to be caring, if we have caring youth we will have caring adults.

Where...

- At school, church, community center, residential facility, libraries, or through your family support program...wherever you can find kids to get involved.
- Display their work at schools, local stores, malls, libraries, a special event you are holding, a community or civic centers, or city hall...the possibilities are endless.

When...

- Start your planning **now!**
- Give kids ample time to complete their projects and to make sure you receive enough entries
- **May 1 - 7, 2011** - display the entries and winner's recognition event.

How...

- Dream Big - start with your ideal event and work from there on the real possibilities.
- Identify key stakeholders in your community and invite them to get involved.
- Pick a theme for the contest.
- Find a business to donate supplies and prizes - You need to sell businesses on what is in it for them, so have a plan as to how you will recognize the donating businesses. Give yourself enough time for donations. Sometimes asking at the local level requires getting permission from state/national offices and that takes time.
- Find a busy place during children's mental health week to display the posters, and a newspaper to print the essays (or at least the winning essays) and plan another event around it if possible. The store donating supplies may also agree to display posters and/or essays.
- Get the media involved...ask a person like a local TV/Radio person, local celebrity, elected official, or school superintendent to announce the winners and give out awards during the week at your event. The media will get involved if it is newsworthy and having a local highly visible person in the community to be involved would be newsworthy to the media. The local media may agree to interview the winners or provide them the opportunity to read their essay as well.
- Have lots of informational materials on children's mental health at your event.
- After the event do not forget to thank everyone properly.
- Think about turning those essays or posters into books or calendars for a fundraiser for your program (*don't forget to get releases or you won't be able to use these creative works for your promotional ideas*).

**Governor Pataki's 2001 Proclamation for
Children's Mental Health Week
(Please modify for use in your own community)**

Whereas, the citizens of the Empire State value their health and that of their families and fellow New Yorkers; therefore, they are proud to support observances such as Children's Mental Health Week; and

Whereas, almost 21 percent of children and adolescents in the United States have a mental health disorder; nearly 11 percent suffer from a major mental illness that results in significantly impaired behavior at home, at school and among peers; 5 percent have extreme functional impairment with their illness; and

Whereas, it is important that children and adolescents, along with their families and communities, learn about the warning signs of mental health problems and where to obtain necessary assistance and treatment; and

Whereas, obtaining a full and accurate diagnosis of a child requires gathering information from diverse sources, including the family, school and others involved with that child; and

Whereas, early diagnosis and appropriate treatment of mental health problems among children and adolescents provide them better opportunities to lead full and productive lives; the participation of family members in the assessment and treatment of children and adolescents is integral to positive clinical outcomes; and

Whereas, Children's Mental Health Week was developed by families of children with special mental, emotional and behavioral needs, to focus on the needs of their children and families; in celebrating this year's theme: "We Are All in this Together," it is fitting to increase public awareness among all New Yorkers of this important issue;

Now, Therefore, I, George E. Pataki, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim May 6-12, 2001 as

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

in the Empire State.

of the State at
eighth day of May

G i v e n under my hand and the Privy Seal
the Capitol in the City of Albany this
in the year two thousand one.

Governor

Secretary to the Governor

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IMPORTANT RESOURCE LINKS

Online Depression Screening Web Site: The mission of this web site is to educate people about clinical depression, offer a confidential way for people to get screened for symptoms of the illness, and guide people toward appropriate professional help if necessary. Also a great site for those concerned over anonymity of themselves or their child. www.depression-screening.org.

New York State Links:

Families Together in NYS: Families Together, the statewide chapter of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, is a parent-run organization that strives to establish a unified voice for children with emotional, behavioral, and social needs. Our mission is to ensure that every family has access to needed information, support, and services. Information & Referral Line: 1-888-326-8644 or www.ftnys.org.

Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc. is a voluntary not-for-profit statewide association with 33 local affiliates located in communities throughout New York State. MHANYS brings together service recipients, families, professionals, advocates and concerned citizens to address all aspects of mental health and mental illness. 518-1-800-766-6177 or www.mhanys.org

NYS Education Department's Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID): a great resource for information on special education, transition, and links to other children's agencies and organizations. <http://web.nysed.gov/vesid/>

National Links:

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health: www.ffcmh.org

National Mental Health America: www.nmha.org

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: www.aacap.org

American Psychiatric Association: www.psych.org

American Psychological Association: www.apa.org

Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation: www.bpkids.org

Center for Mental Health Services' Knowledge Exchange Network: www.mentalhealth.org

National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association: www.ndmda.org

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities: www.nichcy.org

Other Children's Mental Health Links:

About.com's Parenting Children with Special Needs -Great resource site for parents with links, articles, forums, and newsletters: <http://specialchildren.about.com>

Struggling Teens in New York Resource Site -Searchable engine for struggling teens and families of struggling teens: <http://strugglingteens.com>

Family Help in New York, Focus Adolescent Services -Extensive overview of resources, including hotlines, literature, legal info, etc. for parents of adolescents in NYS: www.focusas.com/NewYork.html

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SETTING UP A CHILDHOOD DEPRESSION SCREENING DAY

What are typical screenings like?

First, and most importantly, all screenings should be completely free and totally anonymous. The screening is an opportunity for participants to learn more about the illnesses of depression and manic-depression, complete a brief screening questionnaire, and speak one-on-one with a mental health professional. If appropriate, screening participants may be referred for a complete evaluation and given a list of clinicians or facilities in their area.

When the participant arrives at the screening, they will be offered the opportunity to fill out a written screening questionnaire. The participant does not have to complete this questionnaire if they do not want to. They will then listen to a short educational presentation given by a mental health professional. There will be a question and answer session at the end of this presentation. Then, if the participant has completed the screening questionnaire, they will be called for a short interview with a mental health professional to discuss the questionnaire and any symptoms they may be experiencing. The mental health professional may provide them with a referral list to treatment centers in their area after this interview. While waiting to be called for an individual interview, it is suggested the participant be offered the opportunity to watch an educational video and/or review brochures or literature relative to mental health.

Sample depression and mania screening questionnaires

These tests were developed by National Depression Screening Day Executive Director, Douglas G. Jacobs, MD, incorporating the results of the 1992 through 1997 screening programs as well as the clinical criteria for the disorders as listed in the Diagnostic and Statistics Manual of Mental Disorders-IV, by the American Psychiatric Association. They are not designed to provide an actual diagnosis of depression or manic-depression. For that, participants will need a complete clinical evaluation by a therapist or other health care professional.

Depression:

(Fill in Yes or No)

1. I am unable to do the things I used to do.
2. I feel hopeless about the future.
3. I can't make decisions.
4. I feel sluggish or restless.
5. I am gaining or losing weight.
6. I get tired for no reason.
7. I am sleeping too much, or too little.
8. I feel unhappy.
9. I become irritable or anxious.
10. I think about dying or killing myself.

Continued.....

If participant answered yes to 5 or more of these questions, and have felt this way every day for several weeks, there is a good chance they are suffering from depression and should see a psychiatrist or other health care professional. If they answered yes to question 10, they should seek help immediately, regardless of their answer to any other questions.

Mania:

(Fill in Yes or No)

1. I have a decreased need for sleep.
2. I have much more energy than usual.
3. My thinking is speeded up.
4. I feel unusually euphoric and "high."
5. I can't seem to stop talking.
6. I can't keep my mind on one thing—I jump from task to task.
7. I have a heightened interest in sex.
8. I am irritable and short-tempered.
9. I have a close blood relative who has had a serious emotional illness or alcohol abuse.
10. I think about dying or killing myself.

If participant answered yes to 5 or more of these questions, and have felt this way every day for several weeks, there is a good chance they are suffering from mania or manic-depression and should see a therapist or other health care professional. If they answered yes to question 10, they should seek help immediately, regardless of their answer to any other questions.

Tips for Organizing Depression Screening Day:

- Secure a place for confidential screenings to take place.
- Set specific times and include breaks in between for the mental health professional volunteering their time.
- Advertise, send press releases to media (contact them individually as well), and distribute flyers.
- Secure professionals who are willing to volunteer their time.
- Develop screening form, disclaimer that relinquishes liability, and gather or create educational resources and materials.
- Include resources for both the parent or family member and the child.
- Provide support and referral information.

To find a free, anonymous screening site in your area, call:

1-800-573-4433 or
1-800-269-1014