MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Larissa Russell, LSW, HSV
Interagency Coordinator
Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29

MISSION STATEMENT

The Schuylkill Intermediate Unit, in collaboration with school entities, community agencies, businesses and government partnerships, serves the changing needs of education through delivery of services, improvement of current programs and implementation of new initiatives.


we need to talk about
mental
health

DID YOU KNOW?

- Approximately 20% (1 in 5) of children and adolescents has a mental health disorder. Various reports have indicated an increase during the pandemic.
- 1 in 10 youth experience a serious mental health disorder.
- 90% of people with a mental disorder show red flags or warning signs during adolescence or teen years.
- 50 % of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14; 75% begin by age 24.
- The earlier interventions begin, the more likely the youth will have a positive outcome.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

NORMAL ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT IS A TIME OF DRAMATIC CHANGE:

- **Physical:** Body changes, hormonal changes, sexual awareness, etc…
- **Mental:** Increased independence, individuality, abstract thinking, impulsivity, risk-taking, defy authority, etc…
- **Emotional:** Moodiness, “drama”, self-focused, oversensitivity, etc…
- **Social:** Trying to fit in, romantic interests, pulling away from family to focus on friends, need for privacy, etc…

WARNINGS SIGNS or RED FLAGS

BE AWARE OF FREQUENCY, DURATION, IMPACT ON DAILY FUNCTIONING:

- **Physical:** Disturbed sleeping or eating patterns, glassy eyes, dilated pupils, lack self care; breathing disruptions, dizziness, pounding heart, etc…
- **Mental**: Extremely argumentative, incoherent, confused, delusions/hallucinations, racing thoughts, difficulty concentrating, thoughts of self harm/suicide; etc…
- **Emotional:** Mood swings, depressed mood, impulsivity; lack of emotional response, loss of motivation, etc…
- **Social:** Sudden change/loss of friends, breakup, isolation, use of drugs/alcohol, avoidance of previously pleasurable activities, etc…
- **Trauma:** Exposure to an event, series of events or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotional harmful or threatening It has lasting adverse effects and creates significant difficulty in cognitive functioning and physical, social, emotional, mental or spiritual well-being.

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS

- Threatening to hurt self (in-person, social media, or through a friend)
- Seeking access to weapons, medications, or other means
- Expressing hopelessness or no reason to live
- Extreme anger or seeking revenge
- Extreme anxiety or agitation
- Feeling trapped, shamed or embarrassed
- Facing uncertain consequences (legal, disciplinary actions, etc…)
- Increased drug/alcohol use
- Dramatic mood changes
- Giving away prized possessions



Resources to support & inspire your mental health work

KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP

EMERGENCY HELP (CRISIS and/or 911) SHOULD BE SOUGHT IF:

- Physical distress (chest pain, troubled breathing, fainting, etc…)
- Cognitive Impairment (disorientation, confusion, slurred speech, etc…)
- Threats of violence toward self and/or others (physical or verbal)
- Suicidal ideation and/or behaviors
- Signs of self mutilation (cutting)
- Suspicion of alcohol or drug overdose


STIGMA

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- School (Guidance, School Social Worker, Nurse, Student Assistance Program-SAP)
- Crisis Intervention (1-877-993-4357) and/or 911
- Primary Care Physician/Pediatrician
- Psychiatrists/Psychologists
- Community agencies (SAM; D&A; Outpatient; Etc…)
- Religious or Church Affiliations
- Various support groups

RESILIENCY

The ability to bounce back from stress, adversity, failure, challenges, or even trauma. Some ways to enhance resiliency include:

- Positive relationship with at least 1 adult
- Adults modeling prosocial interactions and appropriate emotional control
- Exercise, self care and daily routine
- Mindfulness and positive coping strategies for stress
- Emotional regulation and problem solving skills
- Family and community connectedness



QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

A child's mental health is just as important as their physical health and deserves the same quality of support."
– Kate Middleton