

Sweetwater Union High School District

Wellness Newsletter Fall 2011

Fact of the Month: Approximately 20% of adolescents have a diagnosable mental health disorder.¹

¹Kessler, R. C.; Berglund, P.; Demler, O.; Jin, R.; Walters, E. E. 2005. Life-time Prevalence and Age-of-onset Distribution of DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Archives of General Psychiatry* 62: 593-602.

Mental Health Conditions Affecting Adolescents

In the United States mental disorders are common among children and can be difficult for both the children and parents to cope with. Mental disorders include Anxiety, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity, Autism, Eating, Mood, Personality, and Schizophrenia. Research has shown that half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14.

Studies completed by the National Institute of Mental Health have found that there is often delay between onset of a mental illness and initiation of treatment.

Coping with Mental Illness as a Family

Adolescents are not the only group within our district that may be experiencing a mental disorder and it is important for both children and adults to seek help.

Mental health problems may be related to excessive stress due to a particular situation or series of events. As with cancer, diabetes and heart disease, mental illnesses are often physical as well as emotional and psychological. Mental illnesses may be caused by a reaction to environmental stresses, genetic factors, biochemical imbalances, or a combination of these. With proper care and treatment many individuals learn to cope or recover from a mental illness or emotional disorder.

1. Acknowledge that you have a family member with a mental illness and seek help from a mental health professional.
2. Learn skills to help manage your stress.
3. Develop new ways of relating to others.
4. Explore other resources.

For additional information regarding coping with mental illness within a family visit the resources provided.

Warning Signs

Signs of Crisis

Call 9-1-1, or seek immediate help when you hear or see any one of these behaviors:

- Someone threatening to hurt or kill themselves
- Someone looking for ways to kill themselves: seeking access to pills, weapons, or other means
- Someone talking or writing about suicide, or about death and dying when this is out of the ordinary for them

Signs of Concern

If someone you care about is showing any or a combination of the following behaviors, have them or help them call the San Diego Crisis Hotline at (800) 479-3339. You could be saving their life!

- Hopelessness
- Rage, anger, seeking revenge
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities, seemingly without thinking
- Feeling trapped—like there's no way out
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from friends, family or society
- Anxiety, agitation, unable to sleep, or sleeping all the time
- Dramatic mood changes
- No reason for living; no sense of purpose in life
- Someone close to them has died by suicide in the past
- The person has attempted to kill themselves in the

Helpful Resources:

County of San Diego – Mental Health Services:
<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/hhsa/programs/bhs/>
Crisis Hotline: (800)479-3339

National Alliance on Mental Illness:
<http://www.namisaniego.org>
Family & Peer Support Helpline: (800)523-5933

It's Up to Us:
<http://www.up2sd.org>

Suicide Prevention Action Plan Committee (SPAPC)
<http://sdchip.org/spap.aspx>