

Raising Healthy Kids

Tri-County Community Action Agency
Southern Providence County
Regional Coalition

Fall 2019

Changing Direction & Thinking on Mental Health and Well-Being

The high schools in Southern Providence County region are introducing *The Campaign to Change Direction* to students and faculty on how to recognize the signs of emotional distress and direct people to local resources.

The Campaign to Change Direction Initiative was developed to change the culture about mental health, mental illness and wellness, encouraging people to start a conversation.

Mental Health Concerns and Impact

- 1 in 5 individuals are impacted by mental illness. (SAMHSA 2018)
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among 10-34 year olds. (CDC 2017)

Five Signs of Emotional Suffering

There is a simple pledge that anyone can do. Learn the Five signs of emotional suffering so that you can recognize them in yourself or help a loved one.

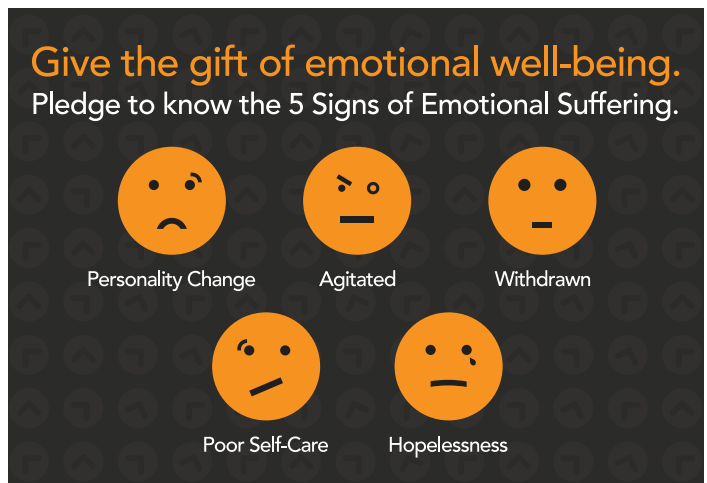
The Five Signs that may mean someone is in emotional pain & might need help are:

Personality Changes. You may notice sudden or gradual changes in the way that a person typically behaves.

Uncharacteristically angry, anxious, agitated or moody. You may notice the person has more frequent problems controlling their temper, is irritable, or unable to calm down.

Withdrawal or Isolation from other people. Someone who used to be socially engaged may pull away from family and friends and stop taking part in activities they use to enjoy.

May Neglect Self-Care and engage in risky behavior. You may notice a change in the person's level of personal care or an act of poor judgment.



Over-come with hopelessness and overwhelmed by circumstances. This person may be suffering from extreme or prolonged grief, or feelings of worthlessness or guilt. People in this situation may say that the world would be better off without them, suggesting suicidal thinking.

Helping someone Else or Yourself

If you or someone you know is struggling emotionally or having a hard time, you can be the difference in getting the help that they need.

Learn more at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-someone-else/>

Never keep it a secret if a friend tells you about a plan to hurt themselves. **CALL 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** to learn about resources in your area, or encourage your loved one to call.



Marijuana can impair learning in adolescents. Chronic use is linked to declines in IQ, school performance that jeopardizes achievements, and life satisfaction.

Helping Your Child Adjust to Middle School

When your child starts middle school, they are faced with all kinds of adjustments. Your parenting tactics may need to change to accommodate their growing brain! This is the time for your child to explore how to navigate the world, and explore becoming a good self-advocate. Snowplowing, or removing all obstacles in their way, actually can have a negative impact on their lives overall. Developing problem solving skills and resiliency is important to become a successful adult.

Ways you can coach your child during this transition:

Academic Pressure

- Review assignments before leaving the school building.
- Use a planner. Check in to help them develop a routine.
- Prioritize homework assignments each night.
- Develop a good relationship with your teachers.

Social Pressure *Encourage your child to:*

- Take a deep breath.
- Give peers the benefit of the doubt.
- Express their needs without passing judgment on anyone.

Logistical Pressure *Support your child to:*

- Review their schedule and use a building map to plan route.
- Get to bed in time to get the essential nine hours of sleep.
- Develop mindfulness practice to manage stress, such as listening to a guided meditation before bedtime.

All of these pressures are learning opportunities for your child, so resist the urge to solve them. The most important parenting skill at this age is listening without overreacting or solving the problem for them. Preteens and teens who feel they can talk to their parents are happier and healthier on every measure. If your child can come to you and feel heard, they will share more with you about what is important to them and the challenges they are facing. That means that both of you will learn more from your ongoing conversations!

Recognizing Dangers Hidden in Plain Sight

Hidden in Plain Sight is an awareness exhibit that allows parents an interactive opportunity to look into a Teenager's Mock Bedroom full of hidden items that may indicate drug and alcohol use. We offer these exhibits at local schools and community events.

To find or schedule the next exhibit near you, please contact psweet@tricityri.org.

11 Ways You Can Empower Your Child Against Bullying

Can you bully proof your child? Unfortunately no. Try not to insulate your child, but to help them develop awareness and skills to protect themselves if needed, and seek help when they are over their head.

1. Model compassionate, respectful relationships to children.
2. Stay connected to your child through thick and thin.
3. Model confident behavior with other people.
4. Directly teach your child respectful self-assertion.
5. Teach your child basic social skills.
6. Teach your child how the dynamics of bullying work.
7. Practice with role plays so that your child feels comfortable responding to teasing and provocations.
8. Teach your child there is no shame in being frightened by a bully, in walking away, or in asking an adult for help.
9. Teach your kids to intervene to help prevent bullying.
10. Teach your child basic bully avoidance.
11. Don't hesitate to intervene.

More at <http://micheleborba.com/bully-proofing-our-kids/>

For information about resources in our community check out our Regional Resource guide at <http://www.johnstonprevention.org/resources/>



For information, contact SPRC Director Patricia Sweet at psweet@tricityri.org or visit us at SPCRegionalPreventionCoalition.org
SPRC is a federally funded organization providing regional leadership for youth substance use prevention and mental health promotion.