

School Social Work Newsletter

"A child's life is like a piece of paper on which everyone who passes by leaves an impression."

Chinese Proverb

"After the verb to love, to help is the most beautiful verb in the world."

Bertha Von Suttner

"All kids need is a little help, a little hope and somebody who believes in them."

Earvin "Magic" Johnson

Suicide and the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth Community

Studies have shown that attempted suicide rates among the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning, (LGBTQ) youth are much higher than the general youth population. According to various studies, LGBTQ teenagers who have been rejected by their families are more likely to suffer from depression, self-harm, drug abuse and have a higher rate of suicide. Parental acceptance regarding a child's "sexual orientation" can dramatically decrease the suicide rate. Bullying among youth that have identified themselves as LGBT is two to three times higher than that of heterosexual teens, and virtually all transgender students report being verbally harassed. Bullying of the LGBTQ community has also been shown to be a contributing factor in many LGBTQ suicides. Fortunately, there are laws including the "Dignity Act" that have been put in place to ensure a safe school environment for students that is free from harassment, bullying and cyber bullying. Studies have shown that social isolation and marginalization at school are emotionally damaging to LGBTQ students, and schools that have a GSA club and other similar peer-supports can be effective in providing psychosocial support. **In addition, to the Dignity Act, Oyster Bay High School also has a GSA, (Gay Straight Alliance) club.** Each year the Oyster Bay GSA club members go into the health classes to discuss issues surrounding the LGBTQ community. Education and awareness are key components in keeping our entire school population safe from harm.

The following signs may mean someone is at risk for suicide. The risk of suicide is greater if a behavior is new, if it has increased, or if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or extreme change. The risk is also greater if the individual is LGBTQ.

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings

If you or someone you know exhibits **any of these signs**, seek help as soon as possible.

Resources:

- Lifeline: 800-273-TALK (8255)
- Long island Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgender Center: 631-665-2300
- Middle Earth Hotline: 516-679-1111
- Pride for Youth: 516-679-9000

Sibling Rivalry

Upcoming Events

**ASSEMBLIES**

“Ready, Set, Go!”

(Roosevelt, Vernon)

“Teen Truth” (OBHS)

“Ryan’s Story” (Vernon)

DISTRICT WIDE

Red Ribbon Week

Spirit Week

Unity Day

Food Drive

Toy Drive



**School Social Workers
and Dignity Act for All
Students Coordinators:**

Carole Brown, PhD

Theodore Roosevelt and

James H. Vernon

516 624-6579

E-mail

CBrown@obenschools.org

Migdalia Rosario, LCSW

James H. Vernon and

OBHS

516 624-6563

E-mail

MRuiz@obenschools.org

Matthew Brown, LCSW

OBHS

516 624-6539

E-Mail

MBrown@obenschools.org



“It’s my turn!” “He hit me!” “You love her more!” “Why can she stay up later?”

Sound familiar? Families with more than one child probably began noticing sibling rivalry as soon as the second baby arrived home. Sibling rivalry is quite common. It is defined as: jealousy, competition and fighting between siblings. Sibling rivalry can be challenging for parents and may impede the healthy development of sibling relationships.

Parents can improve sibling relationships and minimize rivalry by utilizing the following strategies:

- Introduce cooperation *and* competition. The skills needed for each contribute to more well-rounded perspectives.
- Teach healthy conflict resolution.
- Involve your children in setting “family ground rules.”
- Help your children distinguish between “feelings” and “actions.” When they know how to “talk it out” they won’t need to “act it out.”
- Give each child the time and space they need.
- Don’t compare your children to one another
- Refrain from “labeling” your child. Don’t pigeonhole him or her by saying things like “she’s the angry one” or “he’s the quiet one.” Let each of your children be who they are and show them your acceptance.
- Teach them that fair is not equal. Differences in age will result in different privileges and responsibilities.
- Try to identify any patterns in their conflicts. If you notice more conflicts occur when the children are tired or hungry you can use preventive strategies.
- Model productive frustration tolerance and anger management.
- Allow children to work out their disagreements on their own, but be prepared to step in to protect a younger child or during a conflict with an uneven playing field.
- Hold family meetings to discuss values in interpersonal relationships.

It is suggested that parents are mindful about their children’s relationships. Unchecked sibling rivalry can become abusive. Sibling abuse affects 1 in 3 children each year in the United States. Sibling abuse includes verbal, emotional, physical or sexual abuse. There are websites devoted to helping adults who were victims of sibling abuse during their childhood. Mental health experts identify several negative and sometimes life-long effects of sibling abuse.

Books on Sibling Rivalry

- Siblings Without Rivalry: How to Help Your Children Live Together So You Can Live Too. Faber, Adele and Mazlish, Elaine.
- Time Out! Resolving Family Conflicts: www.peaceeducation.org
- Creating Caring Children: The First Three Years: www.peaceeducation.org

Resources for Sibling Abuse

- North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center 516-626-1971
www.northshorechildguidance.org
- Youth and Family Counseling Center 516-922-9867 www.yfcaoysterbay.org

