

School Social Work Newsletter



School Social Workers and DASA 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
MRosario@obenschools.org

Matthew Brown, LCSW
OBHS
516- 624-6539
E-Mail
MBrown@obenschools.org



Have a wonderful and safe
summer from your OB-EN
school social workers.



Mental health is an important part of our human existence and it is integrally connected to our physical, emotional, and spiritual health. In fact, in order to manage our total well-being in a proficient manner, we must effectively attend to and support all four aspects of our being.

Our overall **mental health is defined by the Center for Disease Control, (CDC) as, "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."** Shockingly, it is estimated that **only about 17% of all U.S citizens are considered to be in a state of optimal mental health.** Not surprisingly, there is emerging evidence to support that positive mental health is associated with improved physical, psychological, emotional and social well-being. **Promoting, achieving, and maintaining these areas of health in our students are a growing concern for our educational system** as it directly impacts our children's ability to access all of the educational assets the schools offer as well as their ability to achieve academically.

In order to understand the challenges that befall us we must turn our attention to mental disorders to gain understanding of the problem. **Mental illness is defined by the CDC as "collectively all diagnosable mental disorders" or "health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior, (or some combination thereof), associated with distress and/or impaired functioning."** Depression is the most common type of mental illness, affecting more than 26% of the U.S. population. According to National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH), **9% of adolescents aged 12-17 yrs., reported at least one major depressive disorder and 17% of high school students reported that they seriously considered attempting suicide.** It has been estimated that by the year 2020, depression will be the second leading cause of disability throughout the world, trailing only to heart disease.

Of further concern is the connection between mental and physical health. Evidence has shown that **mental disorders, (especially depressive disorders), are strongly related to** the occurrence, treatment, and course of many chronic diseases, including **diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, asthma, addictions, and obesity. Mental disorders also contribute to many high risk behaviors for chronic diseases** such as, physical inactivity, smoking, excessive drinking, drug abuse, and insufficient sleep. **Adolescents are particularly at risk** due to brain developmental factors, changing bodies, fluctuating hormones, and growing autonomy. **Teaching emotional intelligence and coping skills is immensely important.**

Building resilience to mental illness in our youth includes a number of factors, among the most important are caring relationships with adults and an easy-going disposition. Students themselves can use a number of strategies, including exercising regularly, to reduce stress and promote resilience. Schools and communities are also recognizing the importance of “resilience” and “emotional intelligence” in adolescents. ***Oyster Bay Schools have expanded health courses and increased specialized programs that focus on adolescents’ social-emotional learning and coping skills. For example,*** in the high school this includes Challenge Day, Rachel’s Challenge, and Red Ribbon Week activities. Counseling is offered to all students from Social Workers and Psychologists in each of our buildings.

There are many resources available to help insure children’s as well as adult’s mental health vs. illness. However, impediments to effective prevention and intervention in mental health still exist. Among the most profoundly impacting is ***stigmatization, along with its prejudicial beliefs and resultant discriminatory practices which still exist to prevent many of us from seeking the appropriate help.*** Stigmatization is an attempt to label a particular group of people as less worthy of respect than others imparting a mark of shame, disgrace or disapproval that results in discrimination. ***Stigma is about disrespect Stigmatization leads to:***

- Fear, mistrust, and violence against people living with mental illness and their families
- Family and friends turning their backs on people with mental illness
- Prejudice and discrimination

In short, stigmatization of people who have mental illnesses keeps them from seeking and or receiving the help they need to achieve mental health.

Consider that parents would not hesitate to bring their children to the pediatrician when they present with a fever or pain, nor do they neglect regular trips to the dentist when their children have tooth pain. We need to help end the myths and prejudice surrounding mental illness by educating ourselves about mental health, its diagnosis and treatment, and by understanding its role in our general health and overall wellness. We can support mental wellness by noticing and promoting ***emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being*** in our children’s lives.



The following is a list of helpful websites on a variety of mental health topics

TREATMENT AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Youth and Family Counseling Center, Oyster Bay, NY

www.yfcaosterbay.org

516-922-6867

North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center, Roslyn, NY

www.northshorechildguidance.org

C. W. Post Psychological Services Center, Greenvale, NY

www.liu.edu/CWPost/Academics/Schools/CLAS/Dept/Psychology/PsyD/PSC.aspx

Hispanic Counseling Center, Hempstead, NY

516-538-2613

Long Island Crisis Center, Bellmore, NY

24hr/7 day week hotline

www.licrisiscenter.org

516-679-1111

American Society for Suicide Prevention

www.afsp.org

Pride for Youth

www.pridefor youth.org

Mental Health Association of Nassau County, Uniondale, NY

www.mhanc.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

www.mentalhealth.samsha.gov

Drug and Alcohol Prevention

www.nida.nih.gov

www.dareamerica.gov

www.samsha.gov

www.nassaucountyny.gov/1691/chemical-dependency

Eating Disorders

www.eating.ucdavis.edu/resource/ny

Parent Resources

including information regarding bullying, relational aggression, cyberbullying, sexual harassment or assault and parenting education

www.usa.gov/Topics/Parents.shtml

