

Keeping TEENAGERS Emotionally & Physically Safe

Kelly Lister, MSW/LCSW

WCPSS SENIOR ADMIN - CRISIS INTERVENTION & PREVENTION

MARK COWELL, MSW-CRISIS INTERVENTION SPECIALIST

Parents/Guardians

Administration

Student Services

Teachers

Community

STAKEHOLDERS

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Goals for this presentation:

- Recognize warning signs that may indicate your child needs extra support
- Understand how to get help and connect to resources
- Work as a team (home and school) to help our children become balanced in life

CURRENT CONCERNS

- National Alliance on Mental Illness Helpline calls are up 65% since March 2020
- Symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorders increased considerably in the US between April-June of 2020, compared to same time period in 2019*
- 40.9% of those surveyed reported at least one adverse mental or behavioral health condition*

*(CDC, Weekly report June 24-30, 2020)

DEPRESSION & SUICIDE

- 60% of people who die by suicide have major depressive disorder
([verywellmind.com](https://www.verywellmind.com), July 9, 2020)
- Most common underlying disorder to die by suicide is depression ([mhanational.org](https://www.mhanational.org))
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death (ages 15-34)
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death (ages 10-14)

DEPRESSION AND SADNESS ARE NOT THE SAME

**Depression originates
from the inside**

- Biochemical
- Biological

**Unhappiness originates
from the outside**

- Normal grief/loss
- Situational Stressors

WHY ARE YOU SAD?

SADNESS vs. DEPRESSION

Ask your child “why are you sad”?

- if your child can identify what is making them sad it maybe situational and can be eliminated or reduced then the sadness may dissipate.
- if they can't identify what is making them sad, has lasted awhile and is affecting their daily functioning it maybe time to see their pediatrician.

COVID COULD CONTRIBUTE TO SADNESS

- Isolation
- Unable to go to school
- Unable to participate in sports or other extra-curricular activities
- Fear of contracting COVID
- Parents loss of job/housing
- and many other possible consequences due to COVID

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THESE BEHAVIORS...

- Stress
- Verbal or written threats
- Previous suicide attempts
- Depressed mood
- Changes in personality
- Increase or decrease in eating/sleeping
- Drop in school performance and/or attendance

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THESE BEHAVIORS...

- Withdrawal from people and things
- Recent loss
- Giving away possessions
- Hopelessness or helplessness
- Feel like a burden to others
- Self Harm (high risk behaviors)
- Use of drugs or alcohol

WHAT TO DO...

DO:

- trust your gut
- seek professional help and take action
- ask questions/talk openly
- show you care
- remove all dangerous items
- If there is a threat, take all threats seriously
- collaborate with school

WHAT NOT TO DO...

DO NOT...

- ✗ **Do not ignore** what your child is telling you
- ✗ **Do not act shocked** or judgmental
- ✗ **Do not leave them alone** if they say they want to hurt themselves or want to die
- ✗ **Do not believe** this is just “attention seeking” “normal adolescent behavior” or “a phase”
- ✗ **Do not dismiss the school’s concerns** if they call with a concern

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Know your child's:

- Passwords
- Social Media sites/apps
- Friends
- Whereabouts
- Grades
- Social Activities

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Keep child's cell phone/ tablet overnight
- Let technology work for you (ex. Locator app)
- Talk to your child/have family time
- Ask “how can I help?” or “how would you like for me to help?”

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Set limits to keep safe
- **Be a parent, not a friend**
- Get your child drug tested if you suspect
- Search their room and possessions if you suspect
- Understand your child can be at-risk

REDUCE STRESS

Promote	Promote balance/avoid overscheduling
Allow	Allow for down-time
Establish	Establish rules/routines
Make	Make sleep a priority
Practice	Practice time and project management skills
Celebrate	Celebrate effort instead of achievement and small victories
Encourage	Encourage your child to volunteer and help others

BUILDING RESILIENCY

Accept	Accept child for who they are
Help	Help them set realistic goals/expectations
Teach	Teach children to be problem solvers and decision makers
Allow	Allow children to experience failure
Help	Help them recognize that mistakes are experiences from which to learn
Share	Share your own experiences with overcoming failure

**AS A PARENT,
HOW DO I GET HELP?**

COMMUNITY SUPPORT & RESOURCES

- WCPSS Support & Consultation
- Pediatrician/Family Doctor
- Crisis & Assessment
- Holly Hill Hospital
- Alliance Behavioral Health
- Private Therapists
- Emergency Hospitals

<https://www.wcpss.net/suicideprevention>

REMEMBER

**We are not
in the same
boat, but we
are all in the
same storm**

Suicide is never the result of a single factor or a single event: no single CAUSE; but instead, many CAUSES

“We must begin to see suicide as a symptom of serious illness, like coughing and sneezing are symptoms of a cold, not as something selfish, hostile, irresponsible or weak”

*Thank you
for being
here today*

