



Square One Specialists in Child and Adolescent Development

Tuesday, May 21, 2013

Mental Health Awareness May 2013

Announcements

- May is Mental Health Awareness Month
- Which mental health issues affect children and adolescents ?
- Knowing when to see a specialist for help

Mental Health Resources

Mental Health America
NAMI Louisville
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families

New Square One Patients

New Patient Forms
Services and Fees
FAQ

Square One Staff

Judith Axelrod, M.D.
Behavioral-Developmental Pediatrician

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Licensed Clinical Psychologist

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Speech-Language Pathologist

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Imagine if we lived in a world where everyone knew the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect. Imagine what could be done if everyone were equipped with the knowledge to help a child who is the victim of abuse and/or neglect.

Of all victims of violence or neglect, children are the most vulnerable. They often do not have a voice and when they speak, children are often not taken seriously. Approximately 90,000 children in the state of Kentucky were reported to be victims of abuse and neglect last year. Of course, those are only the reported cases. It is estimated that there are twice as many victims in actuality.

The price of silence on this issue is simply too great. April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and is the perfect time for communities to rally around the most vulnerable citizens to work together to raise awareness about abuse and put protective factors into place for each child. By promoting safety, awareness and open communication about the issue of abuse and neglect, children may be saved from victimization.

Mental Issues Affecting Children and Adolescents



The following are the key warning signs that child abuse is occurring: (2011 Joyful Hearts Foundation)

Unexplained injuries. Visible signs of physical abuse may include unexplained burns or bruises in the shape of objects. You may also hear unconvincing explanations of a child's injuries.

Changes in behavior. Abuse can lead to many changes in a child's behavior. Abused children often appear scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn or more aggressive.

Returning to earlier behaviors. Abused children may display behaviors shown at earlier ages, such as thumb-sucking, bed-wetting, fear of the dark or strangers. For some children, even loss of acquired language or memory problems may be an issue.

Fear of going home. Abused children may express apprehension or anxiety about leaving school or about going places with the person who is abusing them.

Changes in eating. The stress, fear and anxiety caused by abuse can lead to changes in a child's eating behaviors, which may result in weight gain or weight

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loss.

Changes in sleeping. Abused children may have frequent nightmares or have difficulty falling asleep, and as a result may appear tired or fatigued.

Changes in school performance and attendance. Abused children may have difficulty concentrating in school or have excessive absences, sometimes due to adults trying to hide the children's injuries from authorities.

Lack of personal care or hygiene. Abused and neglected children may appear uncared for. They may present as consistently dirty and have severe body odor, or they may lack sufficient clothing for the weather.

Risk-taking behaviors. Young people who are being abused may engage in high-risk activities such as using drugs or alcohol or carrying a weapon.

Inappropriate sexual behaviors. Children who have been sexually abused may exhibit overly sexualized behaviors or use explicit sexual language.

When to See a Specialist

According to Kentucky State Law, EVERY CITIZEN of the Commonwealth is a mandatory reporter – that is, if you have knowledge of or suspect that a child is being harmed, it is your duty to report this to the authorities. Contact your local Department of Community Based Services (DCBS) office for more details. Also call 1-877-KY-SAFE1 to make a report.

IF someone you know needs help, help is available. Please contact Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky at 1-800-CHILDREN for more information and referrals for services. Reports of abuse or neglect can also be made by calling this number.

Mental Health Resources

Mental Health America: <http://www.pcaky.org/>

The mission of Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky is to prevent the abuse and neglect of Kentucky's children.

NAMI Louisville: <http://chfs.ky.gov/>

The Department for Community Based Services performs child protective services functions for the state. Regional staff receives child allegations, conducts investigations and consults with central office specialists as necessary. Central office specialists provide technical assistance on policy issues, conduct case reviews in local offices and track child fatalities.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families:

http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/define.cfm

Child Welfare Information Gateway promotes the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, youth, and families by connecting child welfare, adoption, and related professionals as well as the general public to information, resources, and tools covering topics on child welfare, child abuse and neglect, out-of-home care, adoption, and more.

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