



Children's Mental Health Week May 4-10, 2008

Mental Health Is Important

Mental health affects how people think, feel and act as they face life's situations. It affects how people cope with stress, relate to one another and make decisions. Mental health influences the ways in which individuals look at themselves, their lives and others in their lives, as well as the way that they look at the world around them. Like physical health, mental health is important at every phase of life.

Children and Adolescents Can Have Serious Mental Health Challenges

Along with adults, children and adolescents can experience mental health disorders that may interfere with the way they think, feel and act. If untreated, mental health disorders can lead to possible school failure, family conflicts, drug abuse, violence and even suicide. Studies from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services show that at least one in five (20%) of children and adolescents has a mental health issue, difficulty or challenge. An estimated two-thirds of all young people with mental health issues – a population projected to range from 7.7 million to 12.8 million – are not getting the help they need.

Signs of Mental Health Disorders Can Signal a Need for Help

Children and adolescents with mental health issues need to get help as soon as possible. A variety of signs may point to mental health disorders in children or adolescents. Some warning signs to pay close attention to may be:

- Feeling sad and hopeless for no reason most of the time.
- Increase in anger or outbursts, crying a lot or overreacting to things.
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt.
- Feeling anxious or worried.
- Unable to get over the loss or death of someone important.
- Extremely fearful or having unexplained fears.
- Constantly worried about physical problems or physical appearance.
- Frightened that his or her mind either is controlled or is out of control.
- May also stop interacting with others or have inappropriate interactions with other people in their lives.

Important Messages About Child and Adolescent Mental Health:

- Every child's mental health is important.
- Many children have mental health issues or challenges.
- These issues are real, painful and can be severe.
- Mental health disorders or challenges can be recognized and treated.
- Caring families and communities working together can help.

ARIZONA 24-HOUR CRISIS HOTLINES:

Maricopa County: 1-800-631-1314

Pinal, Gila, Yuma and LaPaz Counties: 1-866-495-6735

Pima County: 1-800-796-6762

Graham, Greenlee, Santa Cruz & Cochise Counties: 1-800-586-9161

Mohave, Coconino, Apache, Navajo & Yavapai Counties: 1-877-756-4090

Gila River Indian Community: 1-800-259-3449

Colorado Indian River Tribes: 1-866-495-6735

Pascua Yaqui Tribe: 1-520-591-7206

Teen Lifeline for AZ teens in crisis: 1-800-248-TEEN (8336) or (602) 248-TEEN



