



HEALTHY MINDS FOR A HEALTHY NEW YORK



MH Update – 3/2/16 – MHANYS Healthy Young Minds Newsletter – Issue 2

Mar 3, 2016 | Mental Health Update

MHANYS is very pleased to send out the second edition of Healthy Young Minds, a resource dedicated to high school aged youth to help promote understanding and encourage discussion of mental health issues among teachers, students and parents. In September, we send out our first edition to every school district in New York State and we received an overwhelmingly positive response.

If you are interested in finding out more about our work in bringing mental health curriculums into schools and greater teacher education and support than contact MHANYS Public Policy Director John Richter at jrichter@mhany.org

Remember to follow us on twitter at @MHAacrossNYS

March 3, 2016

Dear High School Principal:

Here is the latest issue of [Healthy Young Minds](#) a resource for your school on timely topics of importance to high school aged youth (attached and below). It's intended to promote understanding and encourage discussion of mental health issues among teachers, students and parents. One in five teens reported that they have suffered from a mental disorder with symptoms severe enough to impact their daily lives. This is why it's

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so important to create an environment where these issues can be discussed and information is easily available.

Please share the newsletter, with parents, teachers and staff. Reprint articles in your regular communications with parents and students. We know that educational outcomes are improved when mental health is regularly discussed and accurate information is readily available. Furthermore, bullying and stigma are reduced and students are more likely to seek the help they need.

The Mental Health Association in New York State (MHANYS) is a respected advocate for promoting access to mental health services. MHANYS and our 30 affiliates across the state work to combat stigma and promote well-being and recovery through all our programming.

Healthy Young Minds is distributed 4 times a year, free of charge. Please give credit when reprinting articles. Copies are available by contacting the Mental Health Association in New York State. info@mhanys.org or www.mhanys.org or www.youthnys.org.

Thank you in advance for your help in promoting mental health. And thank you for your work in educating our youth.

Sincerely,

Glenn Liebman
CEO

Here is the latest edition of Healthy Young Minds a quarterly publication of the Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.

Schools are encouraged to share articles and content of the Healthy Young Minds newsletter as appropriate in either printed or electronic forms. Please give credit to MHANYS.

Making a difference: Protective factors in a youth's life

What causes one youth to struggle with addiction, mental health problems or risky behaviors and another seem to coast through high school unencumbered by anxiety, depression or substance abuse? We all know that there is a complex maze of factors such as genetics, family connections and community

at each youth. Protective factors increase a young person's

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likelihood of success and risk factors increase the likelihood of mental health problems or substance abuse.

When students enter high school, they face social, emotional, and educational challenges. What's exciting is that schools, teachers and parents can improve student outcomes by increasing protective factors and reducing risk factors.

Building a positive school culture

A positive school culture is linked to improved academic and behavioral outcomes and helps create a sense of acceptance and attachment to school life. This shapes students' feelings and attitudes, which in turn impact on their academic performance and mental health.

To build a positive school culture, schools are encouraged to introduce or strengthen programs that provide opportunities for students and teachers to interact with one another on an informal basis and provide activities that promote positive peer bonding such as recess, clubs or school buddy programs. Schools should promote high academic expectations for their students and place more emphasis on mastery of a subject matter and less on competition and relative ability. A positive relationship with at least one adult who is not the parent, is a strong protective factor. Therefore, teachers who get to know their students can make a difference in their lives.

Creating a protective school culture:

- Encouraging a commitment to learning
- Praising achievements and accomplishments
- Acknowledging successes and abilities
- Asking students for opinions and solutions
- Modeling positive behavior and respect
- Encouraging student participation and helping
- Setting clear classroom rules and consequences
- Keeping the channels of communication open

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Typical Adolescence? or Signs that Require Help?

Adolescence is a time of change—change that prepares a young person for adult life. Young people begin to develop their own beliefs, cultural values and sexual identity, and begin thinking about the future. These changes can lead a youth to turn away from family and toward friends, to question authority and take risks. We also know that mental health problems often appear during adolescence. How do we distinguish between normal adolescent behavior and signs of serious mental health problems?

There are a number of signs and symptoms to look for. If a young person is experiencing several at one time and the symptoms are causing problems in their ability to study, work or relate to others, he or she should be seen by a mental health professional. Youth with suicidal thoughts or thoughts of harming others need immediate attention.

Some signs of potential problems:

- Social withdrawal, withdrawal from activities or a loss of interest in others
- Problems with concentration, memory, speech or difficulty performing familiar tasks
- Increased sensitivity to, or avoidance of, sounds, smells, touch, sights or stimulating situations
- Apathy or feeling disconnected or a sense of unreality
- Illogical thinking, exaggerated beliefs or magical thinking
- Nervousness or fear or suspiciousness of others
- Odd or unusual behavior
- Dramatic sleep or appetite changes or a decline in personal care
- Rapid or dramatic mood changes

Improving Mental Health Literacy in New York's Capitol

Mental health is a public health emergency. As the number of teen suicides continue to rise, New York policy makers are searching for ways to improve

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Association in New York State (MHANYS) is promoting a campaign to increase mental health literacy. And in doing so, to improve understanding and access to services.

Our campaign includes:

Mental Health Education in Schools: Legislation has been introduced to include mental health as part of the health education curriculum. (A.3887-A and S.6046).

Mental Health Education for Teachers: Legislation in the Senate would help teachers get access to information and resources to better understand mental health and support students learning about the subject. (S.6234-A)

Funding Mental Health Literacy: MHANYS is proposing additional funding in the New York State budget for training in Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid. This training helps adults understand what to do when someone is experiencing a mental health crisis or is showing signs of a mental health or addiction disorder. We are also proposing enhanced funding for school based mental health programs to support more school social workers and therapeutic after-school mental health services.

Other legislative and budget priorities include: Supporting legislation to raise the age of young people being sent to prison; providing mental health support to youth in the justice system; providing mental health workers employed by not-for-profit agencies with a living wage; supporting access to medications by providing service providers with a mechanism to override insurance restrictions in the best interest of the patient; and supporting funding for crisis intervention teams and services for veterans and military personnel.

Did you know? Eating Disorders Facts for Teens

- Binge-eating disorder is the most common eating disorder found in 3.5% of women and 2% percent of men. It is characterized by recurrent binge-eating episodes and a feeling of loss of control.
- Anorexia nervosa is found in .9% of women and .3% of men. It is characterized by deliberate self-starvation, emaciation, and a distorted self image.
- Bulimia nervosa found in 1.5% of women and .5% of men is characterized by frequent episodes of eating large amounts of food followed by purging

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such as vomiting, use of diuretics, or excessive exercise.

– People with eating disorders often have mood, anxiety, or substance use disorders and may attempt suicide. The median age for onset is 12 to 13 years.

– Over 50% of those with eating disorders reported receiving treatment for emotional problems, but less than 45% sought treatment for their eating disorder.

Register Now for Mental Health Matters Legislative Day

March 9th in Albany New York

This year we are excited to support legislation to increase mental health literacy and provide adequate funding for mental health services. We are inviting families, students, teachers, mental health service providers, and all our friends to learn about these important issues and talk to policymakers about the importance of mental health for our youth.

Please join us in 2016.

To register: www.mhanys.org

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For more information call 518-434-0439

Tell us what you think!

We hope you find Healthy Young Minds helpful. MHANYS wants to know what you think. Please share your thoughts, suggest topics for future editions, or let us know who might like to receive a copy of *Healthy Young Minds*.

Send your comments to info@mhanys.org

A blue rectangular button with a yellow border and a green shadow, containing the text "Get Help Now" in white.

New York State Resource

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