

Family Connections

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Teen Depression

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), eight percent of teens between 12-17 have suffered a major depressive episode in the last year. Depression can affect teens regardless of gender, cultural background, socio-economic class, school functioning or other achievements. Girls are more likely to experience depression than boys. Although teens are typically moody, depression is not typical and should be treated as a serious illness.

One contributing factor to teens experimenting and becoming addicted to alcohol and other substances is teen depression. Sometimes teens use substances or become sexually promiscuous in an attempt to treat their symptoms. In other cases depressive episodes are triggered by substance use and abuse. Effective treatment often includes counseling and in some instances medication.

Depression can be difficult to diagnose in a teen because they typically feel moody and may not recognize the symptoms. Parents should consider the following symptoms when considering whether or not their teen is experiencing depression. Parents should consider seeking assistance

if they see symptoms lasting for two weeks or longer.

- A persistent sadness or crying a good deal of the time.
- Decrease in feeling of self-worth and increase in general pessimism.
- Increase in restlessness and tiredness.
- Change in sleeping pattern that results in too much or not enough.
- Change in eating patterns.
- Loss of self-confidence in areas that they used to feel good about.
- Problems with substance use and abuse.
- Uncontrolled anger and rage.
- Obsession with death and dying.

A number of factors can trigger depression. Depression can be a result of a traumatic event or significant life event, i.e., divorce, death in the family. A family history of depression can also increase the likelihood a teen will experience depression. In some instances, depression can be a side effect of a medication the teen is taking.

Teen substance use and abuse can be very interconnected with depression. Teens can use substances

to treat the symptoms that they feel, but are unable to identify. According to SAMHSA, 29.2% of adolescents experiencing a major depressive episode in the last year started using alcohol, compared to 14.5% of adolescents who started using alcohol without having experienced a major depressive episode. Additionally, teens can also get depressed because of using substances either as a side effect of using or because it triggers depressive episode. Finally, teens can feel depressed as they engage in the recovery process and they take a closer look at their behavior and its consequences.

Intervention with adolescents is very effective. Counseling and therapy allows the teen to discuss the issues that are contributing to the depression. Medication, if indicated, can address any chemical imbalances in the brain that play a role.

When parents are seeking treatment for their teen, or supporting their teen in recovery, paying attention to a teen's mental health is important. If parents suspect a teen maybe experiencing a depressive episode, they can request a mental health assessment in conjunction with their substance abuse assessment and treatment.

Quote of the Month

If the person you are talking to doesn't appear to be listening, be patient. It may simply be that he has a small piece of fluff in his ear.

- Winnie-the-Pooh

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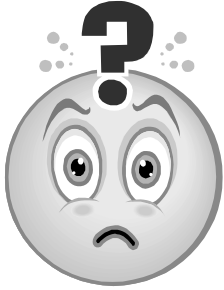
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Do you have an opinion?

Harvard Psychologist Dr. Gene Heyman has written a book called Addiction: A Disorder of Choice. In his book he contends that although an addict can be genetically predisposed to addiction and that changes do occur as a result of addiction, ultimately the decision to use or quit is a choice.

Dr. Heyman disputes that addiction is a life long illness. He says that research that

supports this theory only looks at people who have sought treatment and not those who have used and quit by their own choice. According to Heyman, the decision to re-use is about self-control. Most addiction experts suggest that the decision to re-use is a result of chemical changes that occur in the brain.

Many experts in the field disagree saying that people,

despite suffering dire consequences like loss of family relationships, jobs and health are still unable to quit. They argue that Heyman's argument only takes into account environmental and contextual factors and completely disregards biological factors. (www.jointogether.org)

Juvenile Justice Issues

The Justice Policy Institute just released a new report called The Costs of Confinement: Why Good Juvenile Justice Policies Make Good Fiscal Sense. The report finds that states spend about \$5.7 billion each year incarcerating youth, despite the fact that most are held for non-violent offenses. The report concludes that most youth could be held in alternative settings in the community at a cost substantially less than incarcerating them. It would also lower the recidivism rate by up to 22 percent. For every dollar spent, these alternative solutions could yield up to a \$13 benefit. (For more information go to www.justicepolicy.org.)



Redeploy Illinois is a program in Illinois to divert youth from incarceration in state facilities. Governor Quinn changed the status of Redeploy Illinois from a pilot program to a permanent program on April 7, 2009. Redeploy Illinois is currently in 4 sites across the state and will be expanding. Redeploy Illinois offers counties money for keeping youth in their own communities rather than in state facilities. In exchange counties agree to decrease the number of youth sent to the state by 25%. During the first three years of the project the counties sent 400 less kids to the Department of Juvenile Justice. (See www.modelsforchange.net)

Parent Conference!

The Illinois Federation of Families in Partnership with

Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health invite parents to a

Parent Conference!

June 27, 2009

Parenting Youth With Emotional Challenges: Effective Interventions

Conference topics include, but not limited to, transitioning youth to adulthood, co-occurring disorders, special education and legislative advocacy.

The Conference will be held at University of Illinois-Springfield

To register go to www.iffcmh.net.

IFF defines "parents" broadly.

Someone who an adolescent trusts as a caring adult, including biological parents, guardians, grandparents, step parents, aunts/uncles, teachers, spiritual leaders, coaches, siblings and others, function as "parents".

Those who serve in this role are encouraged to attend the conference.

Parent Handbook is Available!

A Parent's Journey: Navigating Teen Substance Abuse is now available. As a result of many focus groups conducted with families across the state of Illinois, the book was written to respond to participants concern that there was not enough information for families faced with adolescent substance use and abuse. Facilitated by IFF, and utilizing parent and adolescent treatment provider input, the book was developed to provide information for parents and

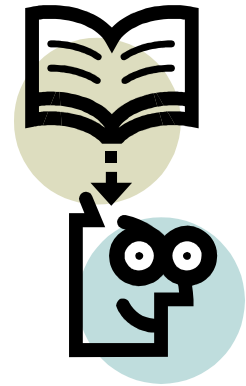
families along the continuum of prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery.

The booklet covers topics such as symptoms of substance use and abuse, the treatment continuum, confidentiality and co-occurring disorders. It also has an extensive list of resources for families including websites, phone numbers, and books.

A Parent's Journey was made possible by a grant

from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA). Therefore the book is considered in the public domain and may be distributed and copied freely.

If you are interested in copy in English or Spanish, please e-mail Stephanie at sfrankiff@yahoo.com. The book is also available for download at www.iffcmh.net or www.illinoistreatmentworks.org.



Facts on Prescription/OTC Drug Abuse

According to The Partnership for A Drug-Free America:

- One in five teens have used a prescription drug to get high.
- One in ten teens report using an OTC cough medicine to get high.
- 28% of teens know someone who has tried to get high from an OTC or prescription drug.
- Teens take anywhere from 25—50 times the recommended dosage of cough medicine to get high.
- The National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates that the intentional abuse of cough medicine is 3.6% for eighth graders, 5.3% for tenth graders and 5.5% for twelfth graders.

Teens who otherwise wouldn't consider getting high, may take prescription/over-the-counter medications, because they think it is a safer way to get high.

Parents Making Plans

Parents from across the state are getting together at the end of May to start talking about how to organize for change in Illinois. A group of parents who are concerned about adolescent substance use and abuse are starting to talk about how they can effect change in Illinois around treatment and recovery services for adolescents, as well as, supportive services for parents.

Interested in getting involved?

E-mail Stephanie at sfrankiff@yahoo.com or Mary at mary4rkids@yahoo.com.

Get the support you need to make change happen in your community!



Illinois Federation of Families

Visit Us on the Web at
www.iffcmh.net

Fill out the family survey at
www.Illinoistreatmentworks.org

Wondering how to receive this
Newsletter?

Contact Stephanie at
sfrankIFF@yahoo.com.

Supporting Families
Across Illinois



The Illinois Federation of Families is an advocacy organization that helps families and children with mental health needs seek a better quality of life.