


What to do when you are concerned about a student's mental health


For Counselors and Other Educators





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■ <http://tinyurl.com/jsg5pgu>



Your Role

It's not just students ...

- Teacher or school staff member
- Parent/Guardian, Grandparent
- Co-worker, peer, friend
- Neighbor
- Other

What is a mental disorder?

- A mental disorder or a mental illness is a diagnosable illness that
 - Affects a person's thinking, emotional state, and behavior
 - Disrupts the person's ability to
 - Attend school and/or work
 - Carry out daily activities
 - Engage in satisfying relationships

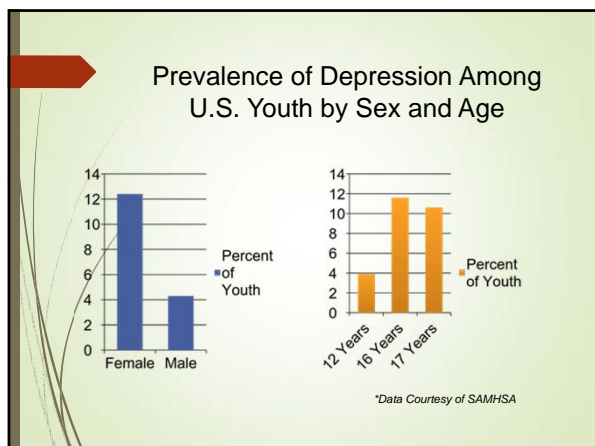
What are some mental health disorders?

- ADD/ADHD/ODD
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Bipolar disorder
- Phobias
- Eating disorders
- Substance abuse disorders
- Etc.

U.S. Youth with a Mental Disorder during adolescence (13-18)

Disorder	Prevalence	With Severe Impact
Anxiety Disorders	31.9%	8.3%
Behavior Disorders	19.1%	9.6%
Mood Disorders	14.3%	11.2%
Substance Use Disorders	11.4%	n/a
OVERALL PREVALENCE		22.2%

*Data Courtesy of Mental Health First Aid for Youth



Treatment?


○ Only 41% of people with a mental illness use mental health services in any given year.

*Data Courtesy of Mental Health First Aid for Youth

Age of Onset

- Anxiety Disorders
- Eating Disorders
- Substance Abuse Disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar
- Depression


*Data Courtesy of Mental Health First Aid for Youth



Age of Onset


○ Anxiety Disorders	○ Age 11
○ Eating Disorders	○ Age 15
○ Substance Abuse Disorders	○ Age 20
○ Schizophrenia	○ Age 23
○ Bipolar	○ Age 25
○ Depression	○ Age 32

*Data Courtesy of Mental Health First Aid for Youth




Typical Adolescent Development

- Physical Changes
 - Hormones
 - Height & Weight
 - Focus on the Physical




Typical Adolescent Development

○ Physical Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hormones ○ Height & Weight ○ Focus on the Physical 	○ Mental Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Abstract thinking ○ Logic & Reason in decision making ○ Developing own beliefs ○ Question authority
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Typical Adolescent Development

- Emotional Changes
 - Quick to change emotions
 - Feel things more intensely
 - Can lead to risk taking & impulsive behavior



Typical Adolescent Development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emotional Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quick to change emotions ○ Feel things more intensely ○ Can lead to risk taking & impulsive behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Experiment socially ○ Peer influence increases ○ Notice sexual identity ○ Learning to manage relationships, including romantic relationships
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So what do you do?

The Action Plan


- Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- Listen nonjudgmentally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies

*Courtesy of Mental Health First Aid for Youth




Signs & Symptoms: Physical

- **Cardiovascular:** pounding heart, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, blushing
- **Respiratory:** fast breathing, shortness of breath
- **Neurological:** dizziness, headache, sweating, tingling, numbness
- **Musculoskeletal:** muscle aches and pains, restlessness, tremors and shaking, inability to relax



Signs & Symptoms: Physical

- **Hormonal:** irregular menstrual cycle, loss of nocturnal emissions, loss of sexual desire
- **Changes in normal pattern:** overeating or not eating at all, sleeping much more or much less
- **Appearance:**
 - Change in hygiene, unkempt
 - Eyes bloodshot and glassy
 - Weight gain or loss



Signs & Symptoms: Emotions

- Depressed mood and/or mood swings
- Unrealistic or excessive anxiety or guilt
- Excessive irritability or anger
- Lack of inhibition
- Lack of emotion or emotional response
- Helplessness or hopelessness
- Oversensitivity to comments/criticism
- Low self esteem



Signs & Symptoms: Behavior

- Frequent self criticism or self blame
- Pessimism
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Indecisiveness or confusion
- Rigid thinking
- Racing thoughts
- Tendency to believe others see one in a negative light
- Altered sense of self
- Delusions or hallucinations
- Odd ideas; lack of insight
- Suspiciousness
- Thoughts of death and suicide



Signs & Symptoms: Behavior

- Crying spells
- Withdrawal from others
- Neglect of responsibilities
- Loss of interest in appearance
- Loss of motivation
- Slow movement
- Use of drugs and alcohol
- Changes in energy level
- Obsessive or compulsive behavior
- Avoidance or phobic behavior
- Showing distress
- Talking rapidly



Self Injury

- Many reasons why people self injure
- Many ways people self injure
- Doesn't always mean they are suicidal
- What to look for:
 - Unexplained or oddly explained cuts
 - Several straight cuts in one area
 - Lots of wrist bracelets/bands
 - Bandages
 - Long sleeves/pants even in hot weather

Typical Stages vs. Warning Signs

- Examine the severity of the change

Typical Adolescence	Potential Warning Signs
Withdrawing from family to spend more time with friends	Withdrawing from friends, family, and social activity
Wanting more privacy	Becoming secretive; need for privacy seems to be hiding something
Moving from childhood likes to teen pursuits	Losing interest in favorite activities and not replacing with other pursuits


*Data Courtesy of Mental Health First Aid for Youth

Assess for Risk Factors

- Exposure to stressful life events/abuse/trauma
- Difficult or abusive childhood
- Ongoing stress and anxiety
- Medical conditions and hormonal changes
- Side effects of medication
- Illness that is life threatening, chronic, or associated with pain
- Brain injury
- Previous episodes of a mental illness or another mental illness

Assess for Risk Factors



- Family history of mental illness
- Learned behavior
- Chemical imbalance
- Substance misuse and sensitivity
- Seasonal factors
- Environmental factors




Listen Non-Judgmentally

The Action Plan

- Use "I" statements stating what you have noticed
- Ask questions, but don't push
- Realize it may be a relief for the young person to talk about how they feel
- Remember it's about THEM not US


Brené Brown on Empathy.mp4



Give Reassurance & Information

The Action Plan

- Be genuine and respectful
- Be careful about using slang
- Be comfortable with silence
- Be in the present with them without comparing to your own youth
- Be aware that the young person's feelings are very real
- Be accepting even though you may not agree
- Be aware of your facial expressions
- Be positive with your feedback
- Be helpful with language without telling them how they feel or "should" feel




Encourage Appropriate Professional Help

The Action Plan

- Up to 90% of individuals with mental disorders are treatable with a variety of therapies and supports
- Evidence-based practices are interventions for which there is consistent scientific evidence showing that they improve individual outcomes


*Data Courtesy of Mental Health First Aid for Youth



Encourage Appropriate Professional Help

The Action Plan


- Your FIRST STEP is connecting with the student the SAME DAY of your concern.
- Let them know they are not alone. There are several types of professionals who could help.
- Depending on what the student tells you, calling home may be required.



Encourage Self Help and Other Support Strategies

The Action Plan

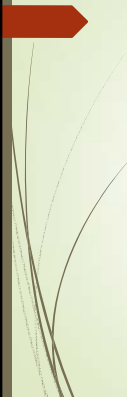
- Identify others who might be helpful
- Explore activities that might help manage symptoms
- Find strategies that interest the young person
- Encourage them to discuss strategies with health professionals



Assess for risk of suicide or harm

The Action Plan


- Important signs a person may be suicidal:
 - Threatening to hurt/kill self
 - Seeking access to pills, weapons, or other means
 - Talking, writing, or drawing about death, dying, or suicide
 - Expressing hopelessness, no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life
 - Having rage, anger, or seeking revenge
 - Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
 - Feeling trapped



Assess for risk of suicide or harm

The Action Plan


- Important signs a person may be suicidal:
 - Increasing drug or alcohol use
 - Withdrawing from family or friends
 - Having a dramatic change in mood
 - Sleeping all the time or being unable to sleep
 - Being anxious or agitated
 - Giving away prized possessions



How to Talk to a Suicidal Person

The Action Plan

- Discuss your observations
- Appear confident, which helps you appear reassuring
- Involve the person in the decision making whenever possible
- If danger is imminent, CALL 911




How to Talk to a Suicidal Person

Ask the questions

Are you thinking about killing yourself?

Tell me more.

Do you have a plan?



Immediate Steps When Someone is Suicidal

The Action Plan

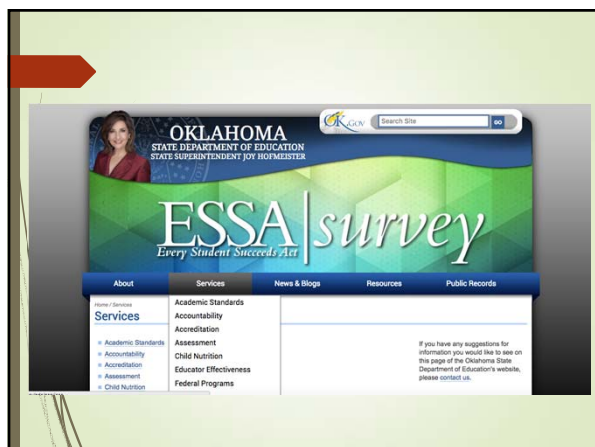
- Do NOT leave the person alone
- Involve the proper people to help
 - Most schools will have a procedure in place that involves notifying an administrator
 - Contact parents if possible
 - Calling police to take the minor into protective custody is always an option

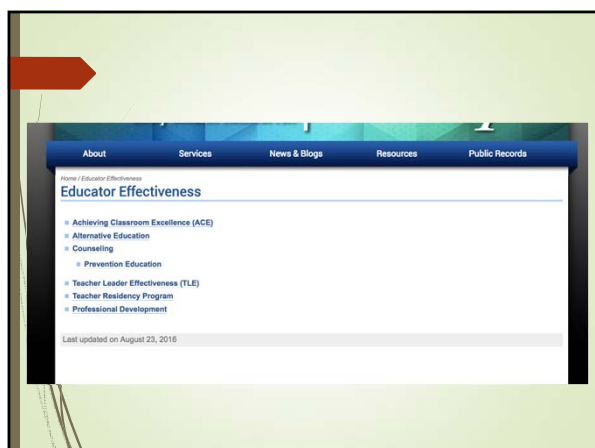


Resources

- Emergency Notification Form
- Third Party Statement
- Child Abuse Investigation Form
- Child Abuse Reporting Form
- Metro Resources
- Statewide Resources
- National Suicide Hotline
- Lifelines Suicide Prevention







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Prevention Services

The Prevention Education section administers programs and initiatives that assist districts in addressing the risk behaviors in Oklahoma's students.

Programs and initiatives include:

- Bullying, Cyberbullying and Internet Safety
- Substance Abuse Prevention
- Suicide Prevention
- Violence Prevention (School Violence, Sexual Assault, and Teen Dating Violence)

NEW! Free Webinars Available & Earn CEUs

It's time to sign up to join us as we offer webinars each month. We have also been approved to offer CEUs for the training if you attend the training live.

Our first webinar will be "Mental Health Concerns and Your Students." It will be held at 11 a.m. on Monday, Sept. 19. [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up to

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New! Crisis Kit for Counselors

There are several sample forms here that need to be tailored for each district. Thank you to Norman Public Schools for sharing their documents with us so that we could share them with you.

- Child Abuse Investigation Form [SAMPLE](#)
- Child Abuse Reporting Form [SAMPLE](#)
- Counselor Process for Responding to Suicidal Ideation [SAMPLE](#)
- Emergency Notification Form [SAMPLE](#)
- Emergency Notification Form with Third Party Statement [SAMPLE](#)
- Mental Health Facilities by City
- Metro Resources
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline [1-800-273-8255](#)
- Suicide Prevention Resources
- Safety Plan [SAMPLE](#)
- Safety Threat Assessment [SAMPLE](#)
- Statewide Resources
- Student Re-entry Plan [SAMPLE](#)
- Third Party Statement

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➔ <http://tinyurl.com/jsg5pgu>



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