



Aware

“Shedding Light on Youth Mental Health & Suicide Prevention”

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“Mental health problems do not affect three or four out of every five persons but one out of one.” . . . Dr. William Menninger

Welcome to AWARE

The goal of AWARE is to increase understanding about youth suicide and mental health issues in a positive, hopeful way.

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or suggestions for future issues.

Healthy Community Alliance,
(716) 532-1010
or e-mail
accordinob@hcanetwork.org



Local Resources

24-hr Crisis Line
1-800-339-5209

Cattaraugus County
Mental Health Assoc.
(716) 372-0208

Crisis Services Kids
Helpline
(716) 834-1144 or Toll
Free 1-877-KIDS-400



International Alliance for Child and Adolescent Mental Health

Intercamhs is a new international alliance that aims to promote the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. Already there are 244 members from 35 countries and membership is growing rapidly. Intercamhs brings together a wide range of professionals from all over the world, each with their own expertise and experience.

What does INTERCAMHS mean by "Promoting Mental Health through Schools"?

Promoting mental health through schools supports a whole school approach involving effective mental health promotion, intervention and treatment. This approach is supported by policies, skills for social emotional learning, a healthy psycho-social school environment and access to services in the school or in the broader community. The full participation of teachers, students, families and community agencies is encouraged with informed dialogue and collaboration among people and programs throughout all phases of the continuum. This action is supported by principles that value diversity and inclusiveness, and practice that creates conditions for empowerment and school organizational development. It emphasizes the critical role of evidence

to guide training, policy, research and practice across four areas:

- ❖ Universal mental health promotion, which seeks to improve school psychosocial environments, skills-based health education for social, emotional learning and brings resources and programs to all students to promote health, successful teaching and learning and academic success;
- ❖ Selective interventions, which provide prevention programs for young people presenting risk factors for problems;
- ❖ Indicated interventions, which provide early interventions to young people exhibiting emotional and behavioral problems; and
- ❖ Treatment, which provides more intensive services to youth presenting established emotional/behavioral problems.

If you have comments or feedback on this working definition of mental health promotion through schools, Intercamhs would love to hear from you. You may participate in a web discussion at:

<http://boards.edc.org:8080/~intercamhs-public>.

For more information, visit
<http://www.intercamhs.org/>





For Kids: Bullying ~ What You Can Do

Recently the newspapers and television news carried a story about the tragic suicide of a teenager who was bullied relentlessly at school. Unfortunately, this has happened far too many times. Bullying is a problem that affects millions of students, and it has everyone worried, not just the kids on the receiving end. Yet because parents, teachers, and other adults don't always see it, they may not understand how extreme bullying can get.

Bullying is when a person is picked on over and over again by an individual or group with more power, either in terms of physical strength or social standing.

Some bullies attack their targets physically, which can mean anything from shoving or tripping to punching or hitting, or even sexual assault. Others use psychological control or verbal insults to put themselves in charge. For example, people in popular groups or cliques often bully people they categorize as different by excluding them or gossiping about them (psychological bullying). They may also taunt or tease their targets (verbal bullying). Verbal bullying can also involve sending cruel email messages or even posting insults about a person on a website — practices that are known as cyberbullying.

What Can You Do?

For younger kids, the best way to solve a bullying problem is to tell a trusted adult. For teens, though, the tell-an-adult approach depends on the bullying situation. One situation in which it is vital to report bullying is if it threatens to lead to physical danger and harm. Numerous high-school students have died when stalking, threats, and attacks went unreported and the silence gave the bully license to become more and more violent. Sometimes the victim of repeated bullying cannot control the need for revenge and the situation becomes dangerous for everyone. Adults in positions of authority — parents, teachers, or coaches — can often find ways to resolve dangerous bullying problems without the bully ever learning how they found out about it.

If you're in a bullying situation that you think may escalate into physical violence, try to avoid being alone (and if you have a friend in this situation, spend as much time as you can together). Try to remain part of a group by walking home at the same time as other people or by sticking close to friends or classmates during the times that the bullying takes place.

Bullying Survival Tips

Here are some things you can do to combat psychological and verbal bullying. They're also good tips to share with a friend as a way to show your support:

• **Ignore the bully and walk away.** It's definitely not a coward's response — sometimes it can be harder than losing your temper. Bullies thrive on the reaction they get, and if you walk away, or ignore hurtful emails or instant messages, you're telling the bully

that you just don't care. Sooner or later the bully will probably get bored with trying to bother you. Walk tall and hold your head high. Using this type of body language sends a message that you're not vulnerable.

• **Hold the anger.** Who doesn't want to get really upset with a bully? But that's exactly the response he or she is trying to get. Bullies want to know they have control over your emotions. If you're in a situation where you have to deal with a bully and you can't walk away with poise, use humor — it can throw the bully off guard. Work out your anger in another way, such as through exercise or writing it down (make sure you tear up any letters or notes you write in anger).

• **Don't get physical.** However you choose to deal with a bully, don't use physical force (like kicking, hitting, or pushing). Not only are you showing your anger, you can never be sure what the bully will do in response. You are more likely to be hurt and get in trouble if you use violence against a bully. You can stand up for yourself in other ways, such as gaining control of the situation by walking away or by being assertive in your actions. Some adults believe that bullying is a part of growing up (even that it is character building) and that hitting back is the only way to tackle the problem. But that's not the case. Aggressive responses tend to lead to more violence and more bullying for the victims.

• **Practice confidence.** Practice ways to respond to the bully verbally or through your behavior. Practice feeling good about yourself (even if you have to fake it at first).

• **Take charge of your life.** You can't control other people's actions, but you can stay true to yourself. Think about ways to feel your best — and your strongest — so that other kids may give up the teasing. Exercise is one way to feel strong and powerful. (It's a great mood lifter, too!) Learn a martial art or take a class like yoga. Another way to gain confidence is to hone your skills in something like chess, art, music, computers, or writing. Joining a class, club, or gym is a great way to make new friends and feel great about yourself. The confidence you gain will help you ignore the mean kids.

• **Talk about it.** It may help to talk to a guidance counselor, teacher, or friend — anyone who can give you the support you need. Talking can be a good outlet for the fears and frustrations that can build when you're being bullied.

• **Find your (true) friends.** If you've been bullied with rumors or gossip, all of the above tips (especially ignoring and not reacting) can apply. But take it one step further to help ease feelings of hurt and isolation. Find one or two true friends and confide how the gossip has hurt your feelings. Set the record straight by telling your friends quietly and confidently what's true and not true about you. Hearing a friend say, "I know the rumor's not true. I didn't pay attention to it," can help you realize that most of the time people see gossip for what it is — petty, rude, and immature.

SOURCE: www.kidshealth.org



HEART Brings Youth Mental Health Education to Schools

HEART (Helping Every Adolescent Rally Together) provides positive youth mental health awareness and education activities in Western New York schools. For more information, call Jessica at 716/886-1242 ext. 326 today!

