



The Indian Valley Character Counts! Coalition Newsletter



June, 2020 - Quarterly

Helping to keep the youth in our community "Healthy, Safe and Drug-Free"

Talk They Hear You

Is a Prevention Campaign that aims to reduce underage drinking and substance use among youth under the age of 21. It provides parents and caregivers with the resources they need to address the issue of alcohol and other drug use with their children under the age of 21. Please check out the mobile app, online resources, and look for the signs in our community.

www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/mobile-application



SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration



What Is Mental Health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, your thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected. Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including:

- Biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry
- Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems

Mental health problems are common but help is available. People with mental health problems can get better and many recover completely.

Early Warning Signs

Not sure if you or someone you know is living with mental health problems? Experiencing one or more of the following feelings or behaviors can be an early warning sign of a problem:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Yelling or fighting with family and friends
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Having persistent thoughts and memories you can't get out of your head
- Hearing voices or believing things that are not true
- Thinking of harming yourself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks like going to work or school

Data Found at www.mentalhealth.gov

What Parents Can Do to Improve Self-Esteem in Their Children

1. Not only tell them they are special, but tell them why.

A child may not believe it when you tell him/her that he/she is special...don't all parents think their kids are special? Be specific. For example, "Ella, you are so tender and kind. I love that you comforted that little girl when she was upset."

2. Let them make age-appropriate choices

It's hard to build self-esteem when someone does everything for you. Give your children choices. "Marcus, they are offering indoor soccer and basketball at the YMCA. You may pick either sport if you want to play." The beauty here is that the child gets to be involved in the decision-making, which results in greater investment in the activity, and, in turn, strengthens self-esteem.

3. Give them age-appropriate tasks

Chores and responsibilities are great ways to build self-esteem, teach independent living skills and even ease burdens around the home. When the child is of age, include him/her in tasks such as laundry, dishwashing, cleaning the car, or taking out the trash.

4. Teach them how to handle disappointments

Everyone faces setbacks and disappointments in life. When your child allows the other team to score the game-winning run because of his error, don't yell at the umpires because of a questionable call. Show your child how to face the disappointment with dignity and move forward.

5. Encourage their creativity (and let them help clean up)

Children can take the blob of play dough and mold fun for hours just as they can with paints, crayons, and legos. Encourage these activities, yet also teach them the importance of cleaning up after themselves which supports a sense of responsibility.

6. Be there at important events in their lives

That 5-word part in the class play may seem small, but your presence and support will likely provide a springboard of confidence for them and be an act of love that they always remember.

7. Allow for frustration to take place and surface at times

Think of teaching your child to tie their shoes. As long as you take over and save the day when the practice gets too frustrating, your child will never be able to master this task and secure a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that often follows.

8. Give physical affection often

A big hug can go a long way. It's one thing to tell your child you love him/her. It's another to do so while holding him/her in your arms.

9. Ask for your child's advice or opinions

What a cool thing it is to have your parent accept your advice. You can ask for their opinion for simple things such as "Mary, which tie do you think looks best? I can't decide."

10. Give eye contact to your child when they speak to you; actively listen

We should use the same communication skills we use with our spouse, friends, and coworkers when we speak to our children. This fosters and communicates a sense of mutual care and respect.

Data Found at www.pennfoundation.org

Mental illnesses are among the most common health conditions in the United States

- More than 50% will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime.
- 1 in 5 Americans will experience a mental illness in a given year.
- 1 in 5 children, either currently or at some point during their life, have had a seriously debilitating mental illness.
- 1 in 25 Americans lives with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression.

Data found at www.cdc.gov

Managing Anxiety & Stress

The outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in people, including concern about their health or the health of loved ones, difficulty sleeping or concentrating, or even worsening of chronic health problems.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in.

Taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family can help you cope with stress. Helping others cope with their stress can also make your community stronger.

Here are some simple things you can do right now to support yourself:

Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.

Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.

Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.

Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, and exercise on a regular basis.

Every day get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.

Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include:

Excessive crying or irritation in younger children

Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits

Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past

Irritability and "acting out" behaviors in teens

Unexplained headaches or body pain

Difficulty with attention and concentration

Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

There are many things you can do to support your child

Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.

Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.

Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.

Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.

Limit the exposure to news coverage and social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.

Data found at www.cdc.gov

Building Resilient Men and Women..... One Child at a Time

A FREE Suicide Prevention Zoom Webinar featuring Local Psychologist and Award-Winning Author, Dr. Michael J. Bradley. Join us on Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 8:30am as we welcome back Dr. Bradley to share his expertise, answer questions, and help us learn how to be compassionate and nurturing caregivers so our children can thrive!
To register, please contact Deb Ryan at 215-453-5165 or dryan@pennfoundation.org



PENN FOUNDATION™
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES
Instilling hope. Inspiring change. Building community.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Please join us on the second Thursday of each month at 12:00pm for our general membership meetings held at Souderton Area School District Office at 760 Lower Rd, Souderton.

Visit our website: www.ivccc.org

Find us on Facebook: Indian Valley Character Counts! Coalition

ABOUT US

As an initiative of the North Penn YMCA, the mission of the Indian Valley Character Coalition is to promote positive youth development by providing information, supporting programs and strengthening community relationships that promote the principles of Character Counts! and that build assets to help youth stay healthy, safe and drug-free.