

The Wellness Exchange



A Publication of
BUSINESS HEALTH SERVICESSM
Solutions for a Healthier WorkplaceSM

For more information call 1-800-765-3277 or visit www.bhsonline.com

Mental Health and Kids

Mental Health Is Important

Just like adults, children and adolescents can have mental health disorders that interfere with the way they think, feel and behave. If left untreated these disorders can sometimes lead to school failure, serious family conflicts, drug abuse, violence and even suicide. Untreated mental health problems are a source of great concern and stress for family members, communities and the health care system. Although the exact cause for most mental illness is not known, current research suggests that a combination of factors including heredity, psychological trauma and severe environmental stress all play a role. The good news is that when treated early and appropriately many children can recover or successfully control their symptoms and lead full and productive lives.



Some Warning Signs

1. Sad and hopeless for no reason
2. Sudden changes in school performance -loss of interest, poor grades
3. Inability to cope with daily activities and problems
4. Frequent outbursts of anger and temper tantrums
5. Long-term negative mood, loss of appetite, thoughts of death
6. Defying authority, skipping school, shoplifting
7. Abuse of alcohol and drugs
8. Noticeable changes in sleeping habits, staying up all night
9. Excessive worry and anxiety
10. Spending more and more time alone

What Parents Should Do

If you are worried that your child has a mental or emotional problem here are some important things for you to do:

1. Make an appointment with your pediatrician to rule out any physical or medical conditions
2. Have your child evaluated by a specialist in children's mental health issues like a psychiatrist, psychologist or clinical social worker
3. Ask a lot of questions!
4. Don't be afraid to get a second opinion
5. Give your child all the love and support you possibly can

Treatment for Children and Teens

Like medical illness, mental illness requires ongoing treatment. Today the best treatment options for children and teens are similar to those used to help adults. The most common approaches include: **Medications:** The medications often used to treat mental illness in children include anti-anxiety drugs, stimulants, mood stabilizing drugs and anti-depressants. **Psychotherapy:** Sometimes called counseling, this method involves a professional helping the child understand their thoughts, emotions and behaviors and develop strategies for dealing with them more effectively. **Creative Therapies:** Art therapy or play therapy may be useful in helping very young children who have trouble using words to communicate about.



For more information visit these websites:

www.nimh.nih.gov

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov>

[www.sdc.gov/mental health](http://www.sdc.gov/mental_health)

Business Health Services is a free and confidential program provided by your employer for you and your family members. BHS can help resolve personal and professional problems.

For additional information call BHS today.

The Great American Smokeout



November 2008 is the 31st annual Great American Smokeout sponsored by the American Cancer Society. This event was started in Randolph, MA in 1971 and the concept went nationwide in 1976. Over the past three decades, the Great American Smokeout has helped millions of people quit smoking. "The American Cancer Society is here to help smokers who want to quit and we have an abundance of resources to assist. We urge smokers to learn more about quitting and to make a plan to begin a smoke-free life", said Elmer E. Huerta, M.D., M.P.H., ACS president. According to the US Surgeon General in 1990, people who quit, regardless of age, live longer than people who continue to smoke. Quitting smoking substantially decreases the risk of lung, esophageal, laryngeal, oral, pancreatic, bladder and cervical cancers.

GREAT AMERICAN SMOKOUT RESOURCES

The Great American Smokeout website: www.cancer.org/greatamericans will feature new desktop helpers, including a Quit Clock and a Craving Stopper. Available November 1, these tools can be downloaded to your computer to help you pick your "Quit Day", prepare for quitting and get support during and after quitting.

The ASC Quitline is a clinically proven, free telephone-based counseling program available in 12 states and the District of Columbia. Since 2000 the Quitline has helped more than 280,000 people quit smoking.

Call them today and get started:
1-800-ACS-2345

WHY SHOULD I QUIT?

- Your smile will be brighter!
- Food will taste much better!
- You'll save money - a pack a day habit costs \$1,700 a year.
- You'll get fewer wrinkles on your face as you age.
- You will get sick less and live much longer!



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DID YOU KNOW?

- 400,000 deaths a year in the US are smoking related
- Pregnant woman who smoke deliver "low birth weight" babies.
- A teen is twice as likely to start smoking if both parents smoke.

Addiction to Nicotine

Nicotine, one of the main chemical components of tobacco, is a habit-forming drug that draws the smoker into a physical and psychological partnership with cigarettes. Once you learn the mechanics of smoking, you may begin to rely on cigarettes for what you believe to be stimulation, relaxation, or stress relief. Your body becomes chemically addicted to nicotine and the more you smoke, the more difficult it is to quit.