

Be healthy in body *and* mind

Historically, mental illness or psychological and emotional issues have been covered up by family or friends, for fear of their loved one or the family being stigmatized. These types of issues can be serious, stressful, and complicated, but there's no reason to cover them up or be afraid of them. Like physical illnesses, they can be treated.



Did you know?

- At least one in five children and adolescents have a mental health disorder. At least one in 10 – about 6 million people – has a serious emotional disturbance.
- Suicide is closely linked to mental illness and substance abuse; effective treatments exist for both.
- The stigma of mental illness and substance abuse prevents many people from seeking assistance. About two thirds of people with mental disorders do not seek treatment.
- Historically, because of the stigma associated with mental illness, substance use disorders, and suicide, there has not been enough funding available for preventive services, and insurance reimbursements are lower for treatments.

Most of us are taught from a young age that it's OK – even important – to tell a parent, teacher or friend when we are not feeling physically well. But what about our mental and emotional health?

If no one has told you yet, *it's just as important to tell a parent, adult, friend, teacher or other trusted adult when you are not feeling mentally or emotionally healthy.*



Look up the word "stigma" in the dictionary and write down the definition. With the word in mind, go through the Herald-Leader and look for articles about different populations that might experience some sort of stigma. Is there something in your life that makes you feel stigmatized?

As a class, do some research into mental illness, looking for the most common mental illnesses for your age group and the treatments that are available.

A HEALTH check-up

Are you and your classmates psychologically and emotionally healthy? Here are aspects of healthy development and some possible warning signs for kids ages 11-15.

Healthy development

- Concern about body image, looks, and clothes
- Focus on self, going back and forth between high expectations and lack of confidence
- Moodiness

- More interested in and influenced by peer group
- Less affection shown toward parents
- May sometimes seem rude or short-tempered
- Better able to express feelings through talking
- A stronger sense of right and wrong

Possible warning signs

- Angry or crying most of the time
- Intense overreaction
- Poor concentration/inability to make decisions

- Frequently feels anxious, worried, or guilty
- Prolonged periods of sadness and hopelessness
- Decline in school performance (skipping school, grades worsen)
- Avoids friends and family/prefers to be alone
- Constantly worried about physical health
- Substance use
- Overly concerned with body image/weight

Ask for help

If you have concerns about yourself or someone you know, tell a

parent or trusted adult. You can also contact: Community Mental Health Centers (www.mhmr.ky.gov); Kentucky Partnership for Families & Children (www.kypartnership.net); School guidance counselors and psychologists Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (www.ffcmh.org); Family Support America, (www.familysupportamerica.org)

