

Child and Youth Mental Health Issues

September 2009 FAQ

Presentation to the Community Council

September 21, 2009

Child and Youth Mental Health Issues

- Half of all lifetime mental illnesses begin by age 14



Priority Issues

- Reduce stigma associated with mental illness and substance abuse
- Increase affordable, available services
- Expand early identification, intervention, and prevention programs
- Increase public programs to treat teen substance abuse

Child and Youth Mental Health in the United States

- Children and youths with mental illness are more likely to:
 - Drop out of high school
 - Be arrested before they leave school
 - Fail more courses
 - Earn lower GPAs
 - Miss more days of school
 - Are retained more often than students with other disabilities

Child and Youth Mental Health in Texas

- 2 out of 3 childcare providers reported caring for children with a behavioral or emotional difficulty
- Of those with diagnosed mental illness, severe emotional disturbance, or those at risk of being removed from their homes or classrooms for mental health reasons, only **18%** receive the mental health treatment for which they qualify

Child and Youth Mental Health in Central Texas

- In Travis County approximately **43,000** children and youth under the age of 18 have or at risk of having a mental health disorder
- Of youth ages 12-20
 - **30%** report using alcohol in the past month
 - **18%** reported binge alcohol use in the past month

What's Working?

- Grants to divert youths from the juvenile justice system
- Safe Schools & Healthy Students Initiative
- ACCESS
 - Positive Behavior Support
- Anti-Stigma Efforts
 - African American Family Support Conf.



Vulnerable Populations

- Ethnic Minorities

Mental Health Issues Affecting Ethnic Minority Child and Youth Populations		
African American	Asian American	Hispanic/Latino American
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overrepresented in populations at high risk for mental illness such as the homeless, the incarcerated, and those in foster care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More likely to exhibit physical symptoms of depression such as stomachaches than behavioral symptoms• Asian refugees at-risk for post-traumatic stress disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More anxiety-related and delinquency problem behaviors, depression, and drug use than non-Hispanic white youth

Source: Office of the Surgeon General, 1999

Vulnerable Populations

- Youths in the Criminal Justice System
 - In FY2008, 67% of youths in the Travis County Juvenile Probation Department were diagnosed with a mental illness
 - The suicide rate of juveniles while incarcerated is 4x that of youth overall

Vulnerable Populations

- Children and Youth Exposed to Violence or Trauma

- Experience more learning and academic difficulties
- Have more behavioral & mood-related problems



Vulnerable Populations

- Foster Care Youth

- In FY2008 there were 969 children in foster care in Travis County
- Between 50%-70% of children entering foster care exhibit behaviors that warrant mental health care
- Struggling to cope with traumatic events

Vulnerable Populations

- Children of Parents with Mental Illness
 - At higher risk for developing mental illness than other children
 - 47% have behavior problems at home
 - 47% have been victimized by a bully
 - 36% have been diagnosed with a mental illness

Vulnerable Populations

- Youth with Substance Abuse Issues
 - Without effective intervention they are at risk for:
 - serious medical & legal problems
 - incarceration
 - suicide
 - school difficulties & dropping out
 - unemployment
 - poor interpersonal relationships

How can we enhance mental health services for children and youth?

- Reduce stigma toward mental illness and substance abuse by dispelling myths and by providing accurate mental health knowledge
- Support increased access to affordable mental healthcare. Public insurance programs do not guarantee that a child will be insured or that they will receive the mental health treatment that they need

How can we enhance mental health services for children and youth?

- Support early identification, intervention, and prevention programs which are more effective and less costly than programs provided later in life
- Increase the # of public teen substance abuse beds. Bed shortages may drive youth into ERs, detention centers, or jails.

What can you do to help?

- Learn the warning signs of possible mental health problems in children and youth

<http://tiny.cc/WarningSigns>

- Learn the signs and symptoms of youth substance abuse

<http://tiny.cc/DrugInvolvement>

What can you do to help?

- Know where people can get help. Call 2-1-1 for referrals and information.
- Educate children and adults about mental health. Example: Green Ribbon Campaign



Recommendations for Action

- Recommend that CAN partners commit a staff member to participate in planning for Child and Youth Mental Health Awareness Day

Where Can I Learn More?

The Austin/Travis County Child and Youth
Mental Health Planning Partnership

<http://www.cymhpp-ctx.org/>

Credits

- This document was produced by:
 - CAN Staff
 - The Austin/Travis County Child and Youth Mental Health Planning Partnership
 - The CAN Assessment Review Committee