

e-SAVE SOURCE

Youth Voices...Grown-Up Choices!

National Association
of Students Against
Violence Everywhere

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Focus On: Speak Out - Are You Okay?

Monthly Focus: Speak Out - Are you Okay?

by Kaleigh Wright, SAVE Youth Advisory Board

It's September, this month SAVE is focused on communication and speaking out with a focus on youth mental health. Did you know that 10% of children and teens have mental and emotional disorders that disrupt their day-to-day lives? There are several different types of mental illnesses and by being able to recognize the signs teens can help those suffering. Some ideas to teach your chapter how to recognize signs of someone with mental illnesses are by having a day dedicated to mental health and inviting a speaker from your local mental health departments. Also, make sure your chapter does plenty of team building exercises to show that everyone can trust one another, so they feel they can speak out about what they are going through.



I want to share more on what your chapter can do to help show those in your school can communicate with one another. Have your chapter make tip cards on how to communicate better and have a conversation with a friend you think needs help. Research states that 25% of those suffering feel others don't have compassion towards them. As a group, you can teach your chapter that it is okay to look towards counselors and/or parents for guidance in the matter. When it comes to mental illnesses the best thing to do is communicate and speak out about what you or a loved one is going through.

For more information on communication and ideas visit:

<http://nationalsave.org/chapter-tools/conflict-management/communication/>

For more information on mental health and a Back-to-School Mental Health Tool-kit: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/back-school>

Students who participate in SAVE demonstrate increased self-esteem and confidence, conflict resolution skills, presentation and public speaking skills, and knowledge about different violence prevention strategies.

~ SAVE Evaluation, ETI Evaluation and Training Institute

"Use the power
of your word in
the direction of
truth and love."

- Miguel Angel Ruiz

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Keeping Up With Your Mental Health

by Gabrielle Allen-Destroismaisons, SAVE Youth Advisory Board



September is a busy time of the year. Most schools are getting their academic year up and running and students are scrambling to find where to go, what classes to take, or what to wear. More important than any of these things though, is the mental health of the students. Mental health can be described as one's psychological, emotional, or social well-being. When students have mental health issues that go undiagnosed or untreated, this can create difficulties in managing stress, schoolwork, and relationships. In more serious cases, untreated mental illness can lead to suicide, self-harm, and risky behavior.

In order to protect our youth and ensure that they have access to all of the mental health resources that they may need, it is essential that educators, advocates, students, and other people looking to make a positive impact, open the door for conversation. This can be done through effective awareness campaigns and by avoiding the stigmatization of mental illness. People are more likely to reach out for help when they feel that their thoughts are valid and that someone will listen to them. Organizations such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, To Write Love on Her Arms, and NAMI, have some awesome ways to get involved and spread the message that there is no shame in asking for help.

While there are many different mental illnesses, I would like to highlight the ones that afflict adolescents at the highest rate. According to the Foundations Recovery Network I, **some of the most common mental health disorders that are afflicting our youth are depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**. By educating yourself on these disorders in particular, you can equip yourself with tools on what to look for and how you can help those who are struggling. The American Psychological Association's website has some of the most current information on all of the aforementioned mental illnesses and is a great resource for learning more.

The start of the new school year in particular can exacerbate the symptoms of anxiety disorders and depression. Whether it's adjusting to a new environment, applying for college, or simply keeping up with coursework, school can be the tipping point for many students who are struggling with mental health issues. For high-achieving youth, the pressure of maintaining a good grade point average or making the cut for a sports team or audition can be crippling. Other students who feel overwhelmed by crowded hallways or difficult homework can find themselves wallowing in a sea of perpetual hopelessness. Fortunately, for sufferers of anxiety disorders and depression, these conditions are for the most part treatable. **Make it your mission to ensure that the students at your school know who their counselors and social workers are.** The resources are present, but will only get used if students feel comfortable reaching out. Another great resource for youth who are struggling with mental illness or suicidal thoughts is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255). When you call, you will be directed to a trained crisis worker will listen to your problems and tell you about mental health services in your area. **A good activity for the month of September would be to post the hotline in bathrooms on school campuses and also to put up fliers in the hallways so that students know that this resource is available to them.**

While most mental illnesses require psychotherapy and/or medication, there are little things that can be done to ensure that your psyche stays functioning at its best. Setting aside time for yourself, learning to cope with negative emotions in a positive way, self-affirmations, and creating a self-care plan are all great skills that everyone should utilize.

Want to know more? Below are great resources on how to get involved further.

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/getinvolved/suicide-prevention-toolkit.aspx>

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/getinvolved/materials.aspx>

<https://twloha.com/get-involved/participate/>

<https://www.afsp.org/out-of-the-darkness-walks>

<https://www.activeminds.org/get-involved/take-action-today>

Source: Foundations Recovery Network - <http://www.dualdiagnosis.org/mental-health-and-addiction/common-young-adults/>

Guest Article by Mental Health America Is It Time to Talk?

If your thoughts, your feelings or the things you are doing just don't feel right, would you know how to talk to someone about what you are going through? If a friend is having problems and comes to you to talk, would you know what to do? You might be surprised to find out that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that as many as 1 in 5 young people under the age of 18 will experience a diagnosable mental health problem in a given year, so it's important to know if you or someone you care about is starting to show signs.

Being aware about mental health begins with being informed. Some of the most common signs and symptoms include unexplained changes in appetite, loss of interest in things a person used to enjoy, or a constant feeling of being worried or sad. While it is normal to not be hungry or not feel like doing something every once in a while, when these and other signs happen together and last for more than a few weeks, it's time to talk.

One way of identifying mental health problems is to take an online screen. A screen is a scientific questionnaire used to determine if signs and symptoms indicate risk of a disorder. Mental Health America has a screen for young people ages 11-17 to help identify risk. Since its launch in spring of this year, over 5,000 young people have taken the youth screen at mhascreening.org. More than 1 in 5 screeners indicated they would share the results with a family member, friend or professional to start a conversation about their risk for a behavioral, emotional or attention disorder.

So how do you start a conversation about your mental health? What do you do if a friend comes to you with a problem? Let's face it—pretty much any conversation about a health or body related issue can be a little awkward. Mental Health America has tips and information to help you get started in, "Time to Talk: Uncomfortable, but Important—A Guide for Adolescents and Teens." Get the guide at www.mentalhealthamerica.net/timetotalk.

There are also serious signs that someone is in crisis and needs more immediate help. These include thoughts or plans of hurting oneself or another person. If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255), text 741741 or call 911.

Just like physical illnesses, treating mental health problems early can help to prevent more serious problems from developing in the future. If you are concerned that you or someone you know may be experiencing a mental health problem, it is important to take action and to address the symptoms early. Start the conversation. Seek help from a trusted adult. Remember there is nothing to be ashamed of and that there is help and hope.

It's time to talk about your mental health when:

- You just don't "feel right" and aren't sure why.
- Your thoughts or things you do just don't seem the way other people think or behave.
- Your thoughts, feelings or behaviors are starting to affect your life at home, school or with friends in a bad way.
- You've had some of the signs and symptoms below for more than a few weeks:

Icons and descriptions of symptoms:

- Feeling sad, empty, hopeless or worthless
- Sensitivity to sound, sight, smell or touch
- Feeling overly worried
- Not being able to do school work
- Feeling like your brain is playing tricks on you and hearing knocking or scratching sounds, or your name being called
- Loss of interest in things you used to enjoy, or withdrawal from others
- Changes in sleep patterns or energy levels
- Irritability or restlessness
- Problems with concentration, memory or thinking
- Loss of appetite or overeating

SAVE Question of the Month

Please share the SAVE Question of the Month with your SAVE members. This a place to ask questions and get responses from SAVE members across the country.

"What can your SAVE Chapter do to bring awareness to mental health issues?"

What mental health topics are important to your SAVE members?"

Please blog your responses to: <http://nationalsave.org/qom-september/>

Opportunities & Information

The Relationship between Bullying and Suicide: What We Know and What It Means for Schools, published by CDC's Division of Violence Prevention, to provide concrete, action-oriented guidance to help school staff increase their understanding of and ability to prevent and respond to bullying and suicide-related behavior. <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-suicide-translation-final-a.pdf>

Preventing Suicide: A Comprehensive Public Health Approach - September 15, 2015 -- 1pm EDT

Suicide is preventable and is a significant public health issue. In 2013, there were over 41,000 suicides in the United States – an average of 113 each day. Each suicide takes a substantial toll on individuals, families and communities. The medical costs and lost wages associated with suicide are estimated to be \$44.6 billion per year. These numbers underestimate the severity of the problem. In the United States, for every one suicide there are 25 attempted suicides. <http://www.cdc.gov/cdcgrandrounds/>

Dating Matters: Understanding Teen Dating Violence Prevention training on VetoViolence. A free, online course, DATING MATTERS® is available to educators, school personnel, youth mentors, and others dedicated to improving teen health. <http://vetoviolenecdc.gov/apps/datingmatters/>

Prudential Spirit of Community Awards

Deadline: 11/4/15. Middle and high school students who volunteered to help a community at home or abroad in the previous year are eligible to apply for an award of \$1,000 <http://spirit.prudential.com/view/page/soc>

NEA Foundation-Learning and Leadership Grants 2015 Deadline: 10/15/15. Learning and Leadership grants support public school teachers, public education support professionals, and/or faculty and staff in public institutions of higher education to fund participation in high-quality professional development experiences, such as summer institutes or action research. <http://www.neafoundation.org/pages/learning-leadership-grants/>

Upcoming Events More info: nationalsave.org/events

Sept	Focus: Speak Out: Are You OK?
7-10	National Suicide Prevention Week
11	National Day of Service & Remembrance
14-10/16	Martin Richard Bridge Builder Campaign
21	International Day of Peace
Oct	Focus: Bullying Prevention
	National Bullying Prevention Month National Crime Prevention Month
5	Child Health Day
5-8	Mental Illness Awareness Week
19-23	America's Safe Schools Week
21	National SAVE Day
23	National SAVE Rock-A-Thon
27	Mix-It-Up at Lunch Day
Nov	Focus: Weapon Safety
	Runaway Prevention Month
23-27	National Family Week

A journey of
a thousand miles
begins with a
single step
- Lao Tzu



National SAVE Youth Summit
March 12, 2016
McKimmon Center
Raleigh, NC

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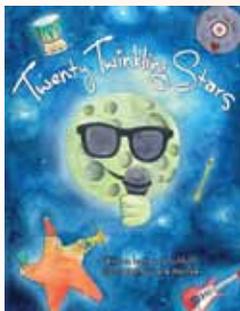
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Twenty Twinkling Stars Opportunity for SAVE Chapters

The National Association of Students Against Violence Everywhere was selected by the Arbonne Charitable Foundation to receive a grant to engage, empower, encourage and educate teens in providing character education to younger students. Through the grant, SAVE chapters will lead outreach to preschools, kindergartens and first grade classrooms to provide lessons on positive character traits, kindness, and bullying prevention. High School, Middle School and Elementary

SAVE Chapters can participate. Students will utilize the book *Twenty Twinkling Stars* and related lesson plan materials. This project will build leadership skills, communication skills, presenting skills, and confidence in the youth presenters as well provide valuable life skills to the children who hear their presentation. Schools participating receive two free *Twenty Twinkling Stars* books as well as a lesson plan and activity guide.



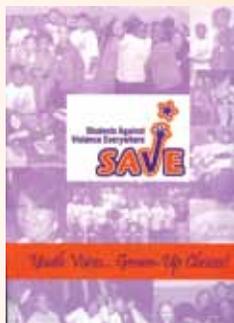
For more information and to download the chapter agreement, visit:

<http://nationalsave.org/twenty-twinkling-stars/>



Shop the SAVE Store:

<http://nationalsave.org/shop/>



September Special!
**SAVE Folders: Buy 20 for
\$5 and get 10 free!**
Item #114