

The Guide Line

May 2010



May is Mental Health Month

For more than 60 years, May has been designated Mental Health Month. Started by the National Mental Health Association (now called Mental Health America) the observance serves as an opportunity to promote awareness of mental health issues and the concept of “whole health and wellness” in schools and communities across the country.

Mental health issues are common. The National Institute of Mental Health reports that approximately 1 in 4 adults and 1 in 10 children and adolescents in the United States suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in any given year. More alarming, however, is that less than half of the youth in America who need help with mental health issues receive it.

Chester County youth are no different. The 2007 Pennsylvania Youth Survey, which included more than 16,000 students from all 12 Chester County school districts reported that among high school seniors, 28% feel “depressed or sad most days,” 28.5% felt they were “no good at all,” and 20.8% felt “life was not worth it.”

School SAP teams have been trained and have the tools to help struggling students, but mental health month is a good time to offer information to all students, including those who have been suffering in silence. COAD Mental Health Services provides educational programs and resources for the general school population, as well as helpful materials for SAP team members. The Mental Health Resource Exchange is open Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Call them at 610-363-6164 for more information.

To learn more about Mental Health Month and this year’s theme, “Live Your Life Well,” visit the Mental Health America website at: www.mentalhealthamerica.net. The site encourages people of all ages to take action to protect their mental health. It also has links to the Live Your Life Well site, which has 10 researched-based tools which can help any individual better cope with the stresses and challenges of every day living.

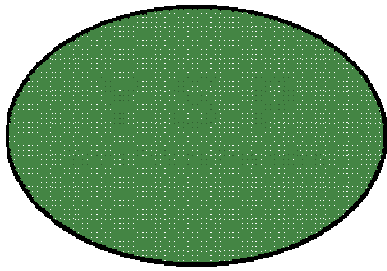
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What Schools Can Do To Observe Mental Health Month

- Post information to educate students, faculty, and staff about mental health information. FREE bulletin board materials are available electronically from COAD Mental Health Services. Call 610-363-6164 to find out more.
- Distribute mental health fact sheets. Information is available at the following sites:
www.mentalhealthamerica.net
www.nimh.nih.gov
www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov
- Hold a viewing of an educational program on Mental Health topics for students, faculty, staff, or parents

For helpful information or resources to assist with any of these suggestions, contact COAD Mental Health Services at 610-363-6164.

The Guide Line is a publication from The COAD Group through funding from the Chester County Department of Drug and Alcohol Services. If you have something you would like to share with others in The Guide Line, please contact Jacquelyn Taylor, Director of SAP Services at jtaylor@coadgroup.com.



Encourage Youth to Get Involved!

The Chester County Youth Suicide Prevention (YSP) Task Force is looking for active students who would like to be involved with a worthwhile cause. The task force represents a coalition of stakeholders that includes mental health professionals, school personnel, and those who have lost loved ones to suicide. The YSP Task Force is currently holding a membership drive aimed at youth - Chester County secondary students are invited to join!

Why Youth Suicide?

- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for ages 10-24
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for college-age youth
- Depression is the leading cause of suicide
- Depression is on the rise for youth

Why Chester County YSP?

- An active group that provides suicide prevention trainings throughout the county
- Recruits performers and produces **Liv • Live** Concerts throughout out the county
- Always interested in good, new ideas to raise awareness
- It has a positive impact on youth in Chester County

To find out more about membership to YSP, contact co-chairs Tracy Behringer at 610-363-6164 or Gina Buckman at 610-344-6265.

Violence Among Girls

A recent report from SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) shows that among girls age 12 to 17, 18.6 percent got into a serious fight at school or work in the past 12 months, 14.1 percent participated in a group-against-group fight, and 5.7 percent attacked others with the intent to hurt them seriously.

More than one-quarter (26.7 percent) of girls in this age group engaged in one of these types of violent behavior in the past year, based on averages for 2006 through 2008.

Despite media attention on high-profile accounts of female's acts of violence, rates of these violent behaviors remained stable when comparing combined data from 2002 to 2004 with those from 2006-2008. For more information, go to the SAMHSA website at www.samhsa.gov and download [violent behaviors among adolescent females](#).



New Social Networking Site For Young Adults Living with Mental Health Concerns

Move over Facebook. A new social networking site has been launched by the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI). *Strengthofus.org* is a new social networking community where young adults, aged 18 and older, may connect with peers, share personal stories, creativity and helpful resources by writing and responding to blog entries, engaging in discussion groups, sharing videos, photos and other news. Developed by young adults, the site is designed to provide mutual support to those navigating mental health challenges during the transition years from ages 18 to 25.

Many resources are offered by the site, including information on independent living, healthy relationships, campus life, finances, employment, and more.

To find out more go to the new website at:

www.strengthofus.org.

Schedule Mental Health Programs For Next Year

Schedule a FREE classroom program, **Mental Health – A Riddle**, now for the 2010-2011 school year. COAD's new interactive educational program is designed for health, psychology or other classes for middle and high schools. Designed to provide a general overview on different types of mental health issues and to reduce the stigma of mental illness, **Mental Health – A Riddle** includes a follow-up speaker who shares his or her experiences living with a mental illness.

To find out more information or to schedule a program in your school, contact COAD's Mental Health Services Department at 610-363-6164.

Chester County visualizes a unified system of care that maximizes all resources around an individual or family. This system of care includes child and adult serving agencies and community partners that join with an individual or family to meet their goals.