Mental Health America releases back-to-school toolkit

Alexandria, VA - In recognition of the challenges a new school year presents for children and adolescents, Mental Health America (MHA) is providing new resources on student mental health (http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/back-school), with an emphasis on web-based tools that can be easily shared across social media platforms.

This year, MHA has developed tools and resources to help increase understanding of how traumatic events can trigger mental health issues and is providing materials on the topic for parents, school personnel, and young people.

“Half of all mental health disorders begin by the age of 14. About 75 percent begin by the age of 24. Early identification and early intervention in children and young adults is essential to their current and future mental wellbeing,” said Paul Gionfriddo, president and CEO of MHA. “As students head back to school, they can be dealing with a host of emotions. MHA wants to remind them that mental health issues are common and treatable and should be addressed as soon as possible - before Stage 4.”

It’s important for parents, caregivers, and school personnel to know the signs that a young person is struggling with his or her mental health and be willing to help. While we can’t completely shield young people from all the traumatic situations they may face, we can help them learn to manage their emotions and reactions in ways that cultivate resilience.

The toolkit is designed for MHA affiliates, advocates, and organizations of all types to use with parents, youth and school personnel to raise awareness of the importance of proactively addressing issues related traumatic events.

This year’s toolkit includes fact sheets pertaining to:

- Understanding trauma
- Recognizing Anxiety
- Recognizing Psychosis
- Recognizing Depression
- Preventing Suicide

Taking a mental health screening is one of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you or a loved one is experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition. Free, confidential, and anonymous screening tools are available at MHAScreening.org for parents and youth to find out if a young person may have symptoms of a behavioral, emotional or cognitive disorder. MHA’s website also has additional material on children’s mental health available at https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mental-health-information?body_value&field_audiences_nid=91.
New York State Department of Health Issues Health Advisory on Vaping-Associated Pulmonary Illness

ALBANY, N.Y. (August 2019) - The New York State Department of Health today announced that it has issued a statewide health advisory to health care providers following recent reported cases of pulmonary disease in people using vaping products in New York State. The advisory alerts providers of this emerging health threat and lists symptoms they should look for in patients.

The Department recommends that anyone who uses vaping products and has concerning respiratory symptoms should stop using the product and consult their healthcare provider.

"While many people consider vaping to be a less dangerous alternative to smoking cigarettes, it is not risk free," said Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker. "These latest reports of pulmonary disease in people using vaping products in New York and other states are proof that more study is needed on the long-term health effects of these products."

As of today, the Department is actively investigating 11 reported cases of pulmonary disease in people using vaping products — one from Long Island, one from Westchester, one from the Capital Region and eight from Western New York. Preliminarily, many cases have reported the use of products containing cannabis, as well as other nicotine products, in the weeks to months prior to presentation. The Department is investigating reported symptoms, health outcomes and possible causes of the symptoms, including the types of product being vaped and the method of delivery; obtaining and testing samples from vaping products at the New York State Department of Health Wadsworth Center Laboratory to help determine the potential cause; and working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other states that are seeing similar cases.

For more information on the health concerns associated with e-cigarettes and similar vapor products, visit: https://www.health.ny.gov/novape.

Youth who drink alcohol are more likely to experience:
- School problems, such as higher absence and poor or failing grades.
- Social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in youth activities.
- Legal problems, such as arrest for driving or physically hurting someone while drunk.

Steuben County Underage Party & Drug Information Tip Line

Anyone with information relating to underage drinking such as parties, underage sales, etc. or information relating to illegal drugs, such as sales, dealers, or other suspicious activities are encouraged to use the tip line.

The tip line will be monitored seven days a week, 24 hours a day, all calls are kept anonymous.

Do your part to help make our communities safe for everyone!

1-844-378-4847
Steuben Council on Addictions (SCA) is a program of Substance Free Living, a service priority for Catholic Charities of Steuben. In The Know is a regular monthly update about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs to help in the prevention of substance use and abuse.

For more information please contact Stacey O'Dell, Prevention Educator at sodell@dor.org or (607) 776-6441, ext. 205.