

Childrens' Mental Health Matters



May 4th-10th is Children's Mental Health Awareness Week, a time to focus on getting children and teens the services that they need to address emotional and behavioral problems.



Early intervention for mental health is proven to improve children's chance of success and emotional health in adolescence and adulthood.

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May Is Mental Health Awareness Month and Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and a time to focus on individuals, children and families getting the services they need to treat the issues that can make life a daily struggle. Whether it is the young woman who struggles with postpartum depression following the birth of her first child or the boy who struggles in school because his ADHD causes him not to be able to focus or the teen who is afraid to tell anyone that she has been cutting to manage her depression. Far too often, people suffer in silence and do not get help because they don't know where to turn or are afraid to speak up due to the continued stigma that mental health can still carry in the public's eye.

May 4th-10th is recognized as Children's Mental Health Awareness week. Our youth today are struggling with so many things including depression, suicidal thoughts, school and social anxiety, problems with attention and focus to name a few. The divorce rate is continually growing and so many children and teens are having a hard time coping with broken families and continued conflict between their parents. There has been a rise in childhood bipolar disorder and autism continues to impact 1 in 68 young children today. Children are being identified at earlier ages as professionals in early childhood intervention programs have begun to see more children with sensory issues, separation anxiety, and emotional regulation problems as well as severe behavioral challenges. Children need intervention early to improve the prognosis for some of the issues we see teens presenting with later in childhood including depression, bipolar disorder, ADHD and anxiety. Mental health professionals working with pediatricians, schools and other providers can guarantee that children get the support and counseling that they need for better health and well being.

Services Offered:

- Free initial phone consultation to explore each patient's needs and fit for services
- Individual Therapy Sessions
- Family Therapy Sessions
- Play Therapy for young children who have difficulty with traditional talk therapy
- Parenting Support
- Linkage to other specialties (nutritionists, psychiatrists)
- Consultation with school staff, pediatricians and other providers

-Workshops/Seminars

Issues Treated:

- ADHD
- Anxiety (separation, social, generalized)
- Depression and Mood Disorders
- Adjustment to Divorce
- Grief and Loss
- Low Self esteem and social skills deficits
- Self injury and suicidal thoughts
- Body image distortion and eating disorders
- Childhood trauma and abuse

Contact Michelle DeLaRosa at (847)302-1196 for a free phone consultation to discuss counseling services to meet your needs. You may also email at mdelarosatherapy@yahoo.com. More info about my counseling practice can be found on my website michelledelarosatherapy.com



Family Mealtimes Matter- The Health Effects of Eating Together

In this fast paced, busy world of raising kids, many families today don't sit down and eat dinner together as families in generations past did. A new study published by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University suggests that the positive effects of dining together on physical and emotional health are worth making this a priority. The study revealed that "teens who eat with family are less likely to drink, smoke, use illegal drugs or abuse prescription meds". The study also found that kids who ate with their families on a regular basis grew up to have healthier eating habits, were less likely to develop an eating disorder, got better grades, had higher self-esteem and were better at communicating with their parents.

Eating Disorders On College Campuses

Eating disorders are becoming much more prevalent on college campuses across the United States. According to Dr. Leslie Heinberg, the Director of Behavioral Sciences for The Bariatric and Metabolic Institute at the Cleveland Clinic, 7-10% of college aged women suffer from an eating disorder. In addition, 1.4% of females in their late teens and early twenties suffer from anorexia while 2.8% struggle with bulimia. It's important to recognize the warning signs to get your teen the help she needs. These include being on never ending diets, isolation (avoiding going to dinner with roommates or passing up social engagements where food will be served), severe food limitations (often rigid food choices or specific food rituals such as cutting food into tiny pieces) and purging. If your teen or your friend are engaging in these behaviors, please seek the help she needs before it is too late.



Why Teens Can't Sleep

We have become a sleep deprived society. And now it is impacting our teens. Developmentally adolescents require 9.5 hours of sleep. However, most teens only average 7.8 hours according to a 2013 study in the Journal Of Health And Social Behavior. Without adequate sleep teens suffer academically and often emotionality. Often conditions like depression and anxiety are exacerbated by too little sleep. This study examined why teens are sleeping less today and identified several factors. First, teens' schedules seem to be packed with academic, social and athletic activities that leave them to do homework much later at night, leading to a much later bedtime. Secondly, this generation of teens has many more electronic distractions today. They feel compelled to text, tweet, and post into the wee hours of the morning and have a hard time shutting down for the night. With teens who have ADHD, these electronic devices can actually stimulate the frontal lobe of the brain and have a negative effect on the production of melatonin making it difficult for the mind to shut down to go to sleep. And finally, with the convenience of texting and instant messaging, teens can stay in contact with their friends all night. They often feel obligated to respond to texts regardless of the hour. Some will even sleep with their phones. Talk with your teen about good sleep habits and leaving some of those texts for the morning after they have slept on it.



OCD In Kids... or Is It Something Else?

According to an article in Children's Everyday Health, there is a new medical condition that is affecting children and mimics the symptoms of OCD when it is actually a strep infection. Approximately 1-2% of kids are affected by OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). The cause of OCD is thought to be problems with pathways and chemicals in the brain (specifically the neurotransmitter serotonin). OCD is a condition in which an individual gets stuck on persistent thoughts and sometimes ritualistic behaviors to help ease the anxiety of the perseverative thoughts. With these particular cases of strep, antibodies in the body that formed to fight off the strep infection act on brain enzymes and trigger a disorder that looks like OCD. This condition is called PANDAS, or pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococci. It is important for pediatricians to catch this condition and treat with antibiotics

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