

Mental Health Services Must be Accessible for All

We all know about the importance of eating right, exercising and taking care of ourselves for good physical health. But what about good mental health? Each May is Mental Health Month, a time that allows us to reinforce that understanding good mental health is equally as important as physical health – for both adults and children.

There is also a National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day. This, too, is a time for education about the importance of positive mental health development and recognition that should mental health services and supports be needed to help a child develop, they are available.

This year’s National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day theme is “*Thriving in the Community*”, with a special emphasis on how high school youth who receive the services they need are more likely to have positive outcomes, such as better grades, and less likely to have negative outcomes, such as involvement with drugs and the juvenile justice system.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reports that in 2006, only 21 percent of youth aged 12 to 17 received treatment or counseling for emotional or behavioral problems in the previous year. There are many reasons why this number is low as many people do not seek treatment for mental illness. Issues such as stigma, undiagnosed illness and others have always been factors. But, it doesn’t have to be the case for our community.

SAMHSA is also working as part of a national effort to take the steps necessary to make mental health services and supports more accessible and effective for children, youth, and families across the United States.

Efforts to address mental health needs for the entire family have always been part of the Delaware-Morrow Mental Health and Recovery Services Board’s mission (DMMHRSB). DMMHRSB funds strategic, targeted services as well as comprehensive programs that impact youth and adolescents. But this work could not exist without the support from the community.

On May 7th Delaware County Commissioners adopted a National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day Proclamation. The proclamation urges our citizens and all agencies and organizations interested in meeting every child’s mental health needs to unite on that day as well as the fundamental necessity of a year-round program for children, youth with mental health needs and their families in Delaware County. The proclamation also recognizes the need for comprehensive, coordinated mental health services for children, youth, and families as a critical community responsibility.

DMMHRSB expresses its gratitude to Delaware County Commissioners Todd Hanks, Ken O'Brien and Tommy Thompson for their support.

Mental health treatment resources are available in Delaware County for children and the entire family. To find a provider of care please logon to www.DMHRSB.org. For additional information about mental illness the following web sites can serve as a resource: www.nami.org; www.nimh.nih.gov; and www.mh.state.oh.us

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