

Sept/Oct 2013

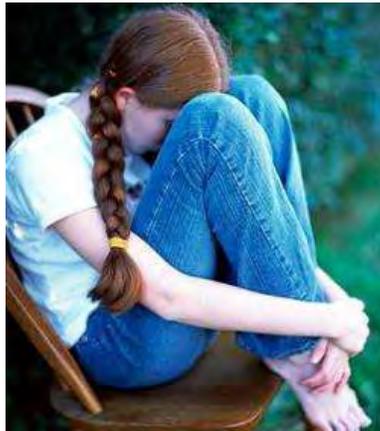
## SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

### Recognizing Mental Health Issues in Children and Youth

Growing up healthy, physically and mentally, is every parent's goal for their child. While physical needs can be easily identified – food and shelter, clothing, immunizations, etc., it is not always easy to know when a child is struggling mentally and/or emotionally.

Mental health issues in children and youth are real, common and treatable. Although one in five children has a diagnosable mental health condition, nearly two-thirds of them get little or no help.

Children's behaviors vary as they move from one childhood stage to another making it difficult to tell if they are going through a "phase" or suffering from depression or other mental health challenges. Parents, teachers and other adults in a child's life are usually the first to notice developing emotional or behavioral problems. Early identification, diagnosis and treatment can help a child reach their full potential.



#### The following signs may indicate the need for professional help:

- Constant worry or anxiety
- Depression, sadness, or irritability
- Hyperactivity or fidgeting
- Persistent nightmares
- Refusal to go to school or take part in normal activities
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Changes in school performance
- Frequent temper tantrums

#### Good mental health basics for children and youth:

- Unconditional love from family
- Self-confidence and high self-esteem
- The opportunity to play with other children
- Encouraging teachers and supportive caretakers
- Safe and secure surroundings
- Appropriate guidance and discipline

#### Special Points of Interest

SAMHSA's Health Information Network  
<http://www.samhsa.gov/children/>

National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health  
<http://www.ffcmh.org/>

National Institute of Mental Health  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>  
[ov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/ov)

#### Additional Information

- <http://www.wellnessworksinschools.com>
- <http://www.schoolfamily.com/>
- Mental Health America  
<http://www.nmha.org>
- NAMI – National Alliance on Mental Illness  
[www.nami.org/](http://www.nami.org/)