Mental Illness and Youth: Resources and Warning Signs

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WHO WE ARE...
NAMI WISCONSIN

The mission of NAMI Wisconsin is to improve the quality of life of people affected by mental illnesses and to promote recovery.
NAMI’s Four Pillars

Support
We provide no-cost, peer-led support groups offered by trained volunteers.

Awareness
We work hard to promote public education and understanding of mental illnesses.

Education
Our education programs ensure individuals get the support and information they need.

Advocacy
We advocate at all levels of government to improve mental health care in Wisconsin.
Mental Illness in YOUTH

- Fifty percent of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 and 75 percent by age 24.
- About 50 percent of students ages 14+ with a mental health condition will drop out of school.
- Seventy percent of youth in state and local juvenile justice systems have a mental health condition.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 10-24 year olds.
- Mental health awareness is often overlooked in school curriculums.
- Learning how to recognize symptoms early can aid in successful recovery and prevent unnecessary suffering.
Mental Illnesses co-occur with Autism Spectrum Disorder

How common are co-occurring mental health disorders with ASD?

• 70% of kids with ASD have at least one mental health disorder
• 41% to 50% of kids have two or more mental health conditions
• Anxiety affects about half of those with ASD who have a mental health condition
Mental Illness in WI Youth

- Teens are not very likely to turn to their adult family members to discuss their feelings. Less than a quarter (23.6%) of those who report feeling sad, empty, hopeless, angry, or anxious would talk with an adult family member about their feelings.

- School belonging is on the decline in Wisconsin. High school students are feeling less connected now than a decade ago. 40% of high school students in Wisconsin feel they do not belong at school.
What are the warning signs?
Knowing the warning signs of a mental health condition will help you to make a positive difference in someone else’s life.

10 COMMON WARNING SIGNS:

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Seriously trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so
- Severe out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors
- Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason
- Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or weight gain
- Seeing, hearing or believing things that are not real
- Repeated use of drugs or alcohol
- Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits
- Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still
- Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
Non-Speaking or Minimally Verbal

Possible Warning signs include changes in behavior such as:

- Changes in mood
- Changes in eating
- Irritability
- Withdrawal

See SMIAviser.org for more information about assessing psychiatric symptoms and medication side effects
STARTING THE CONVERSATION

Use "I" statements so your friend knows that you care and want to help. Try one of these to get things started.

- I've noticed you're [sleeping more, eating less, etc.]. Is everything okay?
- I've noticed that you haven't been acting like yourself lately. Is something going on?
- It worries me to hear you talking like this. Let's talk to someone about it.
- I am always here if you ever need me.
- I want you to know that you are not alone; I am always here for you.

OFFER SUPPORT!

Tell your friend that you want to help. Use one of these statements to show your support:

- Let's sit down together and look for mental health services. Can I help you make an appointment?
- Can I help with things that you need until you're feeling better, like grocery shopping or walking your dog?
- Would you like me to go with you to a support group or a meeting? Do you need a ride to any of your appointments?

Be patient, understanding and provide hope.
Be aware of how your language affects those living with a mental illness. Decreasing stigma through language helps to increase support and awareness for people living with a mental illness. “Mental Health Language” matters.

Seeing the person first and not defining someone by their illness.

Avoid stigmatizing language

- The mentally ill
- Psycho
- Crazy
- Lunatic
- Schizophrenic
- Bipolar
- Mental

Person-first Language

- Person who lives with a mental health condition or mental illness
- A person living with Schizophrenia or Bipolar Disorder
- Experiences a mental health condition
- You would never say: “He’s a cancerous person.”
- People-first language allows you to avoid labeling individuals as or by their illness.
Common Stigmatizing Phrases

- They are just a bad kid.
- They must have bad parents.
- They wouldn’t have autism if the parents had done.....
- The parents just aren’t involved enough.
- I wouldn’t let my kid act like that.
- That kid should be medicated.
- They must be special needs.
- The parents just put them in front of screens all day.
- That’s just their autism.
Programs for Youth:
Let's talk about MENTAL ILLNESS

with [Name] Wisconsin
NAMI Wisconsin Youth Resources:

Let’s Talk About Mental Illness

• Made for elementary age kids to start the conversation about mental illness
• Free downloadable worksheets for youth and adults
• Available in Spanish
• Stickers available
• [https://namiwisconsin.org/lets-talk-about-mental-illness/](https://namiwisconsin.org/lets-talk-about-mental-illness/)
ENDING THE SILENCE
Programs for Parents/Caregivers:
Mental Health Programs for Parents

NAMI Basics
National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI Family Support Group
National Alliance on Mental Illness
Mental Health Programs for Parents

BEING TOGETHER

State-wide virtual mental illness support groups

NAMI Wisconsin
Resources
Local NAMI Affiliates:

Find your Local Affiliate at:

namiwisconsin.org/find-my-nami
Mental Health Resources for Everyone

NAMI Wisconsin Resource Guide

❖ This booklet is for anyone navigating the mental health system or helping someone to do so.
❖ Includes information on insurance, housing, legal issues, treatment, medication and more
❖ Available electronically on NAMI Wisconsin's website or can be purchased via hardcopy
NAMI National Mental Health Resources for Youth

- What to look for and when to act
- Finding mental health care
- Support and accommodations in school
- What to do if in crisis
- Residential treatment
- How to talk to a parent or guardian
- Social media and mental health

https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults
The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is the new name for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which has been available since 2005.

This new three-digit number will be an easy-to-remember way for people to connect with help and support during a mental health, substance use or suicide crisis, providing free and confidential support.

People of all ages who need help for themselves or a loved one can access the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline by:

- Calling 988 (multiple languages).
- Sending a text message to 988 (English only).
- Using the chat feature at 988lifeline.org

Wisconsin
Mental Health Resources for Families

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: www.aacap.org: Provides information and resources for families and youth; maintains online library of mental health condition-specific “resource centers” of information for disorders affecting children and youth. Also provides a child and adolescent psychiatrist finder.

Autism Society National Line: call 800-3-AUTISM (800-328-8476) or visit autismsvociety.org

Child Mind Institute: www.childmind.org; Offers information about children’s mental health issues for parents and educators, including a symptom checker for a wide range of disorders.

InsureKidsNow.gov: (877) 543-7669 / www.insurekidsnow.gov; Website operated by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), providing information about Medicaid and CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance program) for families seeking health insurance coverage for children and teens.

Understood for Learning and Attention Issues: www.understood.org/en; Provides info to parents of children with learning and attention issues about school accommodations. In particular, website includes info on the “Child Find” mandate that covers school accommodations, IEPs (Individual Education Plans), 504s and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act) at: www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/basics-about-childs-rights/child-find-what-it-is-and-how-it-works
Center for Parent Information and Resources: (937) 642-8100 / www.parentcenterhub.org; An accessible guide for parents (and anyone else) looking to understand more about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and other education-related mental health laws. Maintains a “Find a Parent Technical Assistance Center (PTAC)” locator on its website to PTACs in their community that perform a variety of direct services for children with disabilities, families and other organizations that support them at: https://www.parentcenterhub.org/the-parent-center-network/


Well Badger Resource Center: Health information, referral resources, and hotline: (800) 642-7837; https://wellbadger.org

Wisconsin Family Ties: Support and assistance to families who have children with mental health or behavioral health challenges: (800) 422-7145; https://wifamilyties.org
Which of these programs stands out as something that would be helpful for you?

Have you seen these warning signs, and what did you do?
Thank you! Questions?