

MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

The First Week of May is Children's Mental Health Week



Wear a Green Ribbon

Green signifies new life, new growth and new beginnings. Wear a green ribbon to raise public awareness to better the lives of children and youth with serious emotional disorders and to show our support for these children and their families.

Childhood Mental Illness

It's easy to know your child needs help dealing with a fever or a broken bone, but mental health problems can be harder to identify. The tricky part of parenting is knowing the kinds of behaviors and moods that are usual for the stage of development your child is in - and when your child has gone beyond the norm and needs help.

- It is estimated that as many as one in five children or adolescents may have a mental problem that can be identified and treated.
- Serious depression, once thought to affect only adults is now known to affect 1 in 50 children.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15 to 24 year olds and the sixth leading cause of death for five to 15 year olds. The rate of suicide for five to 24 year olds has nearly tripled since 1960.

The first full week in May is designated as National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week to increase the public awareness of well-being and human development of our nation's children and youth. Our faith communities can help educate families to know that effective treatment is available for children's mental health problems, which include depression and anxiety; conduct, eating and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorders; as well as relationship difficulties and grief.

Mental health is essential to overall health and well being. Children and youth with mental health challenges and their families deserve access to services and supports that are family driven, youth guided and culturally appropriate. Faith leaders can inform themselves to provide referrals to mental health providers in their community.

National Alliance on Mental Illness www.nami.org

Mental Health America www.nmha.org

National Institute of Mental Health www.nimh.nih.gov