

Issues and Insights

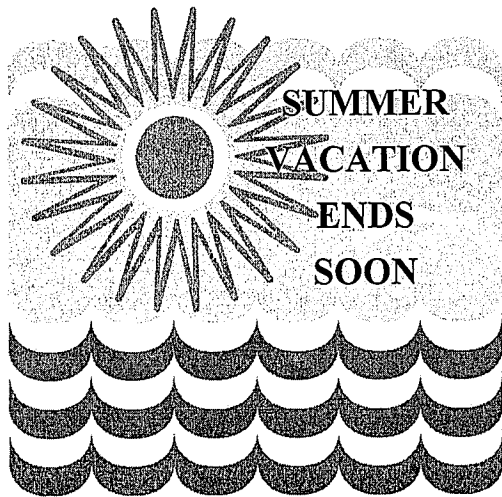
Mental Health Association of Wells County

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Change of Address?

Please be sure to let us know if your address, phone number, or e-mail address changes so that you don't miss your copies of Issues and Insights, the Mental Health Association of Wells County newsletter.

Report changes to:
Mental Health Association of Wells County, 223 West Washington St., Bluffton, IN 46714. Telephone number 260.824.1514

"DID YOU KNOW"

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN

By: Jean Reef

Where has this year gone? Many of us haven't been anywhere much less done anything. For some, vacation was in their back yard doing as little as possible. Others may have had a few get-away days. Time continues in spite of whatever is happening in our lives and on earth.

For those of you with school aged children, it's time to think about what you need to do to get them (and you) ready. In nearly every school district, kindergarten is a full day so let's hope for the best for your five/six year old student. I have seen the supply lists from various schools posted in Walmart so you can start on these. I'm sure that for many families money is tight, so start early. Get the essentials but don't overbuy.

Since few schools in our area have uniforms as a dress code, get practical clothing that meets the school dress code. It's OK to wear hand-me-downs that may be from an older sibling or the bargains found at garage sales. Remember -- one person's trash is another person's treasure. Besides, who likes that itchy feeling of new, stiff clothes!

When parents/guardians go to pay book rental fees before school begins don't be afraid to complete the paperwork for assistance for both textbooks and lunches.

Be sure your student(s) know where the bus stop is and what time it comes each

morning. If your child needs medication, take it (yourself) in an original container, with directions, to the school nurse. This is true for any medication whether prescription or non-prescription

As parents, don't let the anxiety of an "empty nest" syndrome overtake you. Be happy for those taking their steps to becoming the self-assured, well-adjusted adult you always wanted them to be.

What about the rest of us who "have been there, done that"? I believe we have all had to make adjustments in our lives. It makes me feel good to read about or hear about someone I know (or whose parent's I know) achieving or accomplishing what they want in life.

Most of us stay home more and eat out less because of current economic conditions. Some may have become better cooks and found that leftovers really aren't bad after all. Maybe we've become better acquainted with our neighbors and especially with ourselves. When someone needs help or assistance with a project, we're there. We've learned that we can do with less and it doesn't bother us. Many of the things we thought were essential really aren't.

Remember: The best things in life are free!!

This tri-annual deadline came upon me quickly. I chose to borrow an article from the National MHA website about bullying. This is a topic that our chapter has supported in the past. I hope this article will make you aware of a problem that exists everywhere, including Wells County. Greg Werich, President

Bullying: What to Do About It

Although it's always been around, bullying should never be accepted as normal behavior. Bullies, if not stopped, can progress to more serious, antisocial behavior.

Recognize It (for what it is)

Bullying is aggressive behavior. A child is targeted by one or more youths with repeated negative actions over a period of time. These are intentional attempts to cause discomfort or injury and can include name-calling, making faces, obscene gesturing, malicious teasing, threats, rumors, physical hitting, kicking, pushing, and choking. More subtle is simply excluding a child from the group. Make no mistake, bullying is a form of violence that shouldn't be tolerated.

See the Scope of the Problem

- The Journal of the American Medical Association recently reported that one-third of U.S. students experience bullying.
- Only a small percentage of children believe that telling adults will help. Children generally feel that adult intervention is ineffective and will only bring more harassment.

Spot the Bullies

- They are both boys and girls. Boys bully more often and more physically than girls. Girls are more likely to use rejection and slander.
- Bullies usually pick on others out of frustration with their own lives. They target other children because they need a victim who is weaker than them. Some bullies suffer from depression. They're often from homes where harsh punishment and inconsistent discipline are used.

Know Their Targets

- Girls and boys alike are targeted.
- Those who are physically different in race, body size, or clothing. Those with disabilities or those who are dealing with sexual orientation issues. Both groups are kids who are typically anxious, insecure, and suffering from low self-esteem. This makes them good targets.

Three million U.S. teenagers have serious problems in school because they're taunted with anti-gay slurs.. They say teachers ignore harassment 97 percent of the time.

Take Steps to Stop It

Start early. Parent/child talks are critical. Teach kids to respect others before they start school. Even small acts of teasing should be stopped in their tracks. Don't fail to correct this kind of behavior due to a child's young age. This is exactly when to stop it.

Teach your children how to be assertive. Encourage your children to express their feelings clearly, say no when they feel uncomfortable or pressured, stand up for themselves without fighting, and walk away in dangerous situations. Bullies are less likely to intimidate children who are confident and resourceful.

Stop bullying when you see it. Adults who remain silent when children are bullying others give permission to the behavior and thereby encourage it.

Tell your children to take action when they see bullying behavior. Tell them to speak out against the bully and inform a teacher if the behavior doesn't

stop. Bullying continues only when we allow it to.

Communicate clear policies and consequences. Bullying is less likely in schools where adults are involved and firm about stopping bullying. Send out a clear message at your school that bullying will have negative consequences.

Team up. Work with your PTA or local mental health association to make sure that schools treat bullying as violence. Help them develop programs to prevent bullying and promote safe school environments.

Other Resources

National PTA: Safeguarding Your Child at School, Helping Children Deal with a School Bully,

http://www.pta.org/archive_article_details_1117638753468.html

If you or someone you know is in crisis now, seek help immediately. Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach a 24 hour crisis center or dial 911 for immediate assistance.

(Reprinted from National Mental Health America)

HEALTH

HOW DANGEROUS IS HOMOCYSTEINE?

Many medical researchers believe homocysteine can be a **risk factor for health problems** such as heart attacks, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and osteoporosis.

Homocysteine(an amino acid) is a **normal byproduct of digesting meat, fish, dairy and other animal protein sources.**

Like cholesterol, homocysteine **helps perform necessary functions in the body.** However, high blood levels of homocysteine increases the risk for diseases.

Conditions that may increase homocysteine levels in the blood include a deficiency of folic acid or vitamin B6 or B12, kidney failure, some cancers, psoriasis, heavy smoking, and use of certain drugs.

Researchers believe that knowing a patients homocysteine level is possibly more predictive than cholesterol levels in assessing cardiovascular disease risk.

The good news: many people can eliminate excessive levels of homocysteine from their blood. To maintain normal homocysteine metabolism, a balanced diet of foods rich in folic acid such as fortified oatmeal, spinach, broccoli, brussel sprouts, lettuce, cantaloupes, oranges, strawberries, and legumes can be very beneficial.

Talk to your doctor before deciding to take vitamin and folic acid supplements, but do consider using the computer and the public library to learn how your body functions.

Information helps us understand what a doctor is trying to accomplish and definitely helps us be able to ask more questions regarding medicine and procedures.

It's important to know how the body works so we can stop wondering why it can't fix the mess we possibly created or inherited.

By: Kay Manges

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE-"COOLING OFF PERIOD"

On March 12, 2008, Gov. Mitch Daniels (bill sponsored by Sen. Jim Arnold, former sheriff in La Porte, Co.) signed a bill into law, Senate Enrolled Act 27 that states people arrested for domestic violence would have to spend a least eight hours in jail as a cooling off period.

This law would allow victims time to locate help, get their affairs in order, pack their belongings, and get their child/children to a safe location.

The Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence reports 76 deaths attributed to domestic violence between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FROM A SURVIVOR-SEE ENCLOSED FLYER.

MEDICARE H. R. 6331

A milestone has been reached by the House and Senate bipartisan negotiators by compromising on their differences on requirements for health plans under a mental health parity bill. After long deliberation and refinement of the "Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act" (H.R. 6331) on July 9, 2008 the Senate passed the bill. The agreement provides whatever mental health conditions are covered under a health plan must be at parity with medical coverage (except to the extent that a state parity law requires broader coverage). If a plan offers out-of-network benefits for medical or surgical care, it must also offer out-of network coverage for mental health and addiction treatment and provide services at parity. It also preserves strong state parity and consumer protection laws. In other words, this bill will repeal the discriminatory higher 50% co-pay for out-of- network mental health services.

MEDICAID H.R. 2642

The House on the week of June 16, 2008 passed a supplemental funding bill H.R. 2642 that would block harmful Medicaid regulations aimed at restricting rehabilitative, case management, and school-based services. This compromise bill, negotiated by House leaders and the Administration, now goes to the Senate for approval.

By:Melba Cole

Provided in part by:Mental Health America's Advocacy Network

CAREGIVING ---- AN ACT OF COMPASSION

When someone you are very close to develops a chronic illness, usually a partner, family member, or friend, you may find it necessary to become their "special friend", or caregiver. You may find this task to be deeply satisfying, but also physically and emotionally exhausting from time to time, especially if you are the Primary caregiver. It is very important to remember that the person giving care, and the person receiving it, are Partners, and in this together. The illness doesn't change the fact that important relationships continue to be a two-way street. The person with disabilities may need a great deal of assistance, but the needs and concerns of each Partner must also be addressed if the relationship is to remain healthy. "Managing Major Changes--- A Guide for Caregivers".

One of the biggest struggles caregivers face is dealing with the difficult behaviors of the person they are caring for. Having a PLAN for getting through the day—each step of the way—can help caregivers cope. It is very helpful to keep reminding yourself to just do the best you can, and remember to find time to take personal breaks.

Finding Support Groups where you can share your feelings and concerns, hear of helpful ideas, and useful resources based on others' experiences, is an important tool for you. On-line support groups are available to you without having to leave home. Contacting organizations of illnesses, as well as the doctor, for more information about the disease, treatment options, and caregiving resources, is extremely important.

Remember that keeping the person safe is one of the most important aspects of caregiving. It may be necessary to look at the homes through new eyes, as the eyes of the ill person would see, to identify and correct safety risks, thus creating a safe environment to prevent many stressful and dangerous situations.

Helping others selflessly, and caring for someone in desperate need, most often is one of the most compassionate acts you will ever be called on to perform. Love and respect for the "Partner" may be the primary reason for your aid. Even though the Partner may change behaviors through a period of time, they are still needful of caring, compassionate, respectful, and responsible actions of a caregiver even though it might be quite difficult at times.

Look for the "sun" each day, have a plan for each action of the day, look for your personal supports, try to stay rested, and feel the blessings you are both giving and receiving each day.

You are Special!! So is your Partner!!

By: Nancy Bonham

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF WELLS COUNTY

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260.824.1514

HELP THE MHA COMPLETE ITS MISSION - BECOME A MEMBER

Through your membership in the Mental Health Association of Wells County, we will be able to provide quality programs of education, service, and advocacy that will make the lives of persons with mental illness better.

You can become personally involved as a volunteer. Volunteers are always needed and appreciated. Please consider volunteering and call the Mental health Association of Wells County at 260.824.1514 (leave your name and number in the event that you get the answering machine) for more information.

COMING EVENTS

August 3rd - Wells County Day for Kids, 2-5 PM

August 20th - MHAWC Board Meeting

MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

Attention Deficit/hyperactive month

September 16-20 Street Fair

September 17, NO MHAWC Board Meeting

MONTH OF OCTOBER

Domestic Violence Month

October 2, 2008 - At 6 PM An evening with Terra Brantley: "Breaking Through the Silence - The Noise of Overcoming an Abusive Situation," at the Wells County 4-H Community Center Bldg.

October 15, MHAWC Board Meeting

MHAWC Annual and Recognition Dinner - TBA

MONTH OF NOVEMBER

National Alzheimer Disease Month

November 1, 2008 - Health Fair Bluffton Jr. High 7 AM - noon

November 19th - MHAWC Board Meeting