

# NEWSLETTER

## Mental Health Awareness

“Transition planning” refers to the process of preparing students in special our: emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

It plays a big role in how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

It affects how we think, feel, and act.

It shapes how we perceive everything in our world: ourselves, the people in our life, and our everyday lives.

### Mental Health v. Mental Illness

Mental health and mental illness are NOT the same thing, but they are connected. The term health implies a lack of illness. The term illness implies a lack of health. It isn't one or the other. It isn't all or nothing. Using the terms “mental health” and “mental illness” interchangeably is dangerous. It can cause warning signs or “red flags” to be overlooked. This is because everyone has mental health needs but not everyone has a diagnosed mental illness. Supporting people's mental health needs is not a universal design. There is not and cannot be only one way to do it.

Identifying a child's mental health needs is vital.

Treatment of many serious emotional and mental disorders is effective. Psychotherapy, behavioral interventions, medication, and other interventions have been demonstrated to be effective for many childhood disorders.

- Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General, 1999

...Untreated, these disorders can have devastating consequences, including the loss of critical developmental

years, extremely poor academic performance, increased school drop-out and failure, involvement with law enforcement and the justice system, and the ultimate failure – suicide.

- American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

## What should a school/parent look for?

The following signs may be indicative of a child who requires a mental health evaluation:

- ☐ Decline in school performance
- ☐ Persistent difficulty with peers
- ☐ Poor grades despite strong efforts
- ☐ Constant worry or anxiety
- ☐ Persistent somatic complaints
- ☐ School refusal or loss of interest in usual activities
- ☐ Persistent and disruptive hyperactivity
- ☐ Inability to focus or concentrate
- ☐ Continuous or frequent aggression, “acting out” or oppositional behavior
- ☐ Persistent sadness and/or irritability

### Most Common Mental Illnesses in Children and Teenagers:

- Depression/Mood Disorder
- Anxiety
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder
- Conduct Disorder
- Bipolar Disorder
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

### How can Parents and Advocates Support Students?

- Act early.
  - Do not take a “wait and see” attitude: Access early identification and intervention programs to recognize students who may face problems.
- Look to intervene when there is:
- Truancy
- Suspensions – both ISS and OSS
- Disciplinary referrals
- Failing grades
- Repeating grades

Consider a referral to the CSE - the School District is required to evaluate a student in all areas of suspected disabilities. If a student is exhibiting symptoms and they are interfering with the student’s ability to make progress at school, the District should evaluate the student. This can often include a psychiatric evaluation.

A student with a mental health issue may be classified as having an “emotional disturbance” under the IDEA. An emotional disturbance is one of the thirteen categories under IDEA; is not based on a diagnosis of mental illness, per se, rather on the presence of behavior that fits into several prescribed categories and therefore, eligibility is based more on what people (especially school personnel) observe in the behavior of the student rather than a diagnosis from a mental health professional.

The definition of ED under IDEA is:

- 1) A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics:
  - a) an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
  - b) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
  - c) inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
  - d) a generally pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
  - e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
- 2) Must be over a long period of time; and
- 3) To a marked degree that adversely affects a student’s educational performance.  
(Includes schizophrenia)

This means that the school district must consider:

- The child’s functioning in school, including an assessment of the child’s behavior;
- The child’s social relationships;
- The child’s ability to participate successfully in class;
- The ability to complete work and perform acceptably on tests;
- The child’s ability to conform to school rules and classroom expectations; and
- The child’s ability to access education in a way that is productive given their capabilities.

Consider a referral for a 504 plan:

- No specific categories like IDEA requires – “any mental impairment”
- Requires a showing that a student’s disability substantially limits a major life activity (both learning and thinking are ‘major life activities’)
- the student does not have to require special education instruction - may just need related services or accommodations (counseling, preferential seating, etc.)

### Possible Interventions:

- Regular sessions with a social worker or psychologist
- Social skills and peer support groups
- Tutoring during extended absences
- Non-punitive consequences for negative behavior and/or positive strategies for good behavior
- Small class size,
- One-on-one or shared aide
- Communication notebook
- Modified homework assignments
- Late start to school day
- Designation of a 'safe place' (counselors office" where child can go when overwhelmed

### Where to get help:

In some cases a child requires more intense and/or comprehensive services than the school district can provide. In 2001, the Office of Mental Health encouraged counties to develop a Single Point of Access (SPOA) system to simplify and coordinate the process of linking children and their families to the services that can assist in meeting their needs.

In Nassau County, parents or school personnel can contact SPOA: 516-227-7057

In Suffolk County, parents or school personnel can contact SPOA: 631-853-8513

### Upcoming News:

LIAC's PTIC has been busy putting together a video featuring awesome adults who have transitioned to post high-school and college life. They have shared some wonderful insight and we can not wait to share the completed video with you all and revel in their fantastic stories.

LIAC is holding our Fourth Annual FUNdraiser at the Salt Shack at Cedar Beach this summer, Wednesday June 25<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 9 PM. We will be raffling off tickets to the Subway series between the Mets and the Yankees as well as many other interesting baskets.

### LIAC can help Reach us today

Visit us online at [www.theliac.org](http://www.theliac.org)  
for valuable updated information, links to more in depth guidance, or to fill out an online intake form.

El Long Island Advocacy Center brinda servicios y recursos en español. Por favor visite nuestro sitio web para más información.



**Long Island Advocacy Center**




**info@theliac.org**

**www.theliac.org**



**LIAC FUNdraiser**  
**Support LIAC at our**  
**Fourth Annual Beach Party!**  
**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25TH**  
**6:00-9:00 PM**  
**Salt Shack at Cedar Beach**  
**100 Cedar Bch Wy, Babylon, NY 11702**



**Enjoy a summer night with friends, live  
music, a chance to win money and prizes  
and have fun with LIAC!**



**ENTER FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN**  
**2 TICKETS TO THE SOLD OUT**  
**SUBWAY SERIES**  
**AT CITI FIELD**

**SUNDAY, JULY 6TH 1:40 PM**



**Views are from actual seats**  
Seats in this section are selling for over \$1000!



**Section 107**  
**Excelsior Gold**  
**Row 9**  
**Aisle Seats**

(Next to Aaron Judge and Juan Soto)

**Tickets include:**  
**Exclusive access to the**  
**Metro Club, Heineken Club,**  
**and Hudson Club**



**SCAN QR CODE**  
**TO PURCHASE**  
**RAFFLE TICKETS**



**\$20/each**  
**4 for \$60**  
**10 for \$100**

**Winner will be announced at LIAC's fundraiser on June 25th!**  
**You do not need to be present to win!**