

Erica Butler, Ed.D.

Alabama State Department of Education

**Prevention and Support Services** 

334-694-4717

#### 2020 MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS

- > 11.9% (45,000) youth ages 12-17 suffer from at least 1 Major Depressive Episode (MDE)
- > 8.1% (29,000) had 1 severe MDE
- > Depression often co-occurs with substance use disorders, anxiety and disorderly behavior
- > Approximately 25% of young people have experienced some type of anxiety disorder, including obsessive-compulsive disorder, social anxiety disorder or panic attacks
- > 3.9 % (15,000) with substance use disorders
- > 25.9% (6000) with severe MDE received consistent treatment; 67.5% (26,000) didn't receive mental health services

Limited demographic data available for pediatric / adolescent cases and from private providers

Data collected from Mental Health America

### MENTAL ILLNESS vs. MENTAL DISTRESS

Mental Illness (MI) – a specific set of medically defined conditions that affect mood, thinking and behavior. Ex. - Bipolar or Schizophrenia

Mental Distress - a range of symptoms and experiences of a person's internal life that are said to be troubling, confusing or out of the ordinary such as anxiety, confused emotions, hallucination, rage, and depression.

Ex. - Life situations such as bereavement, stress, lack of sleep, use of drugs/alcohol, assault, abuse or accident can cause mental distress.

### CAUSES OF MI DURING CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

- \* Drugs\* Childhood Illnesses\* Genetics

- \* Traumatic Head Injury

  \* Adverse reaction to medication

  \* Abuse (Mental or Physical)

  \* Sexual Assault



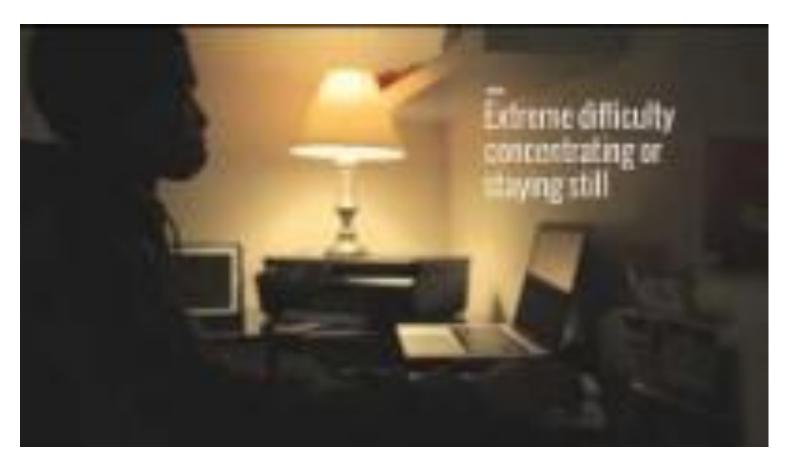


A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.



- > Unable to objectively analyze data
- Unable to concentrate
- > Forgetful

## WARNING SIGNS & SYMPTOMS



https://youtu.be/zt4sOjWwV3M



#### **BEHAVIORAL RED FLAGS**

- > Withdrawing or isolating
- > Pattern of unexplained tardiness / absences
- > Behaviors that disrupt the class
- > Avoidance of situations that might be stressful or trigger anxiety such as participating in group assignments
- > Seeking excessive reassurance
- > Time management problems

#### PHYSICAL RED FLAGS

- Unexplained aches, pains, cuts, bruises, scars or burns
- Noticeable weight loss or gain
- Falling asleep in class
- Significant changes in appearance
- \* Signs of alcohol or drug use (breath odor, dilated pupils, etc.)



## HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE COPE WITH, MANAGE OR AVOID THEIR SYMPTOMS?

- > Social withdrawal and isolation
- > Substance abuse
- > Eating disorders
- > Self-harm cutting or hair pulling
- > Participating in or becoming the target of bullying
- > Excessive or compulsive reliance on sleeping, eating or screen time (TV, gaming, social media, etc.)

#### HOW CAN I HELPA STUDENT IN MENTAL DISTRESS?

### 1. Talk to the student.

Name the things that you have noticed

- You seem \_\_\_\_\_(down, distant, angry, upset)
- I'm sensing that you're feeling overwhelmed by today's class discussion. Talk to me and we'll figure it out together.

Ask in a direct way

Sometimes when people are feeling stressed like you are they have depression, anxiety and thoughts of suicide. Do you?



#### HOW CAN I HELP A STUDENT IN MENTAL DISTRESS?

#### 3. PRACTICE YOUR CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS

- > Communicate respect for the student.
- Express empathy through reflective listening ex. "I'm sick and tired of people always telling me what to do" and your response "You don't like people ordering you around"
- > Help students see the difference between where they are and where they want to be.
- Affirm the positive attempts the student has made so far
- Summarize

#### 4. BUILD MOTIVATION

- ✓ Use open-ended questions ex. "Tell me why you were late to class today?"
- ✓ Affirm and compliment
- ✓ Summarize and present feedback throughout the conversation
- ✓ Handle resistance learn the signs and practice reflective listening instead of putting up resistance of your own.
- ✓ Reframe his/her statements into more direct ones ex. Student says "I don't know why I keep doing this" and your response "You are aware of the dangers and keep looking for ways to stop."
- ✓ Ask permission instead of offering advice as the expert, ask if it would be okay to share some other ideas.

#### 5. STRENGTHEN THE COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

- > Discuss a plan elicit suggestions from the student for the plan
- > Communicate his/her free choice
- Provide information
- > Deal with resistance without fighting it
- > Develop a change plan worksheet
- > Review, clarify, and identify gaps and answer questions
- > Ask for commitment
- > Ask how likely it is that the student will follow through with the plan

# THESE COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES TAKE TIME AND PRACTICE TO MASTER.

Your central role is to teach, not diagnose or treat mental illness.

