

Wheel of Knowledge- Mental Health

In America, most youth are considered physically and emotionally healthy. However, the last 10 years, and the addition of events like COVID-19, have caused statistics to now show that nearly 1 in 5 youth will be diagnosed with a mental illness during childhood or into adolescence. Nearly half of all mental health disorders are diagnosed before the age of 14, and 75% of those diagnoses happening before age 24.

Currently, the most common mental health issues in America are substance use, anxiety disorders, depression and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or ADHD (Mental Illness in Children, Extension Langdale County, University of Wisconsin- Madison). As volunteers and parents of youth, we must be aware of warning signs that could help us assist a youth in need.

The most common warning signs of a mental health issue are:

- ✓ changes in appetite, weight (gain or loss) and sleeping patterns
- ✓ loss of interest in hobbies, sports, 4-H
- ✓ drastic change in school performance
- ✓ worry or anxiety that interferes with normal daily activity
- ✓ acting on impulsive or risky behaviors
- ✓ Substance abuse/use
- ✓ Severe mood swings
- ✓ Difficulty with concentrating and focusing on basic tasks
- ✓ Self- harm behaviors or suicidal thoughts

Objective:

- Participants will learn facts about mental health and the teenage brain.
- Participants will identify ways to reduce stress.
- Participants will learn warning signs of possible mental health issues

Material:

- Wheel of Knowledge (made from white cardstock and spinner)
- Question/answer sheet
- Score keeper
- Prizes- optional

Directions:

- Divide participants into 3 groups or sitting at their designated table- have them name their team. Determine which group/table will spin first.
- Host (club leader) asks questions from question sheet.
- Groups may discuss answer before answering question.
- If correct answer, group spins again.
- If answer is incorrect, the Host will share the correct answer and the next group takes a turn at spinning and answering.
- Scorekeeper will add or subtract points based on correct or incorrect answer.
- Play for several rounds or up to X amount of points.

For more information on mental health, and to find a Mental Health First Aid course, please visit Purdue Extension Mental Health First Aid at <https://extension.purdue.edu/mhfa/>.

Questions:

Facts about Mental Health/Brain Development

- True or false- 1 in 5 children ages 13-18 have, or will have, a serious mental illness.
 - TRUE
- What percentage of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14?
 - 50%
- What percentage of youth have a mood disorder?
 - 11%
- At what age does a girls' brain reach its largest physical size?
 - Age 11
- For boys, at what age does their brain reach its largest physical size?
 - Age 14
- True or false. Your brain doesn't finish developing and maturing until your late teens.
 - FALSE- your brain does not finish developing and maturing until your mid to late 20's.
- What area of the brain is responsible for planning, prioritizing and controlling impulses?
 - Prefrontal cortex
- True or False- with all the development and big changes that your brain goes through as a teenager, this is the time when many mental disorders like anxiety and eating disorders emerge.
 - TRUE
- How many hours of sleep should a teen get every night?
 - 9-10 hours
- True or false- lack of sleep may also increase irritability and depression.
 - TRUE

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-6-things-to-know/index.shtml>

Ways to reduce stress

- What is the name of a workout that involves stretching, deep breathing and finding a spiritual place?
 - Yoga
- True or False- A little stress can actually be good for you.
 - TRUE
- True or False- Crying, running and laughing are all activities that have been proven to reduce stress.
 - TRUE

- What is positive self-talk?
 - Avoiding negative thinking, not being hard on yourself, rewarding yourself for managing stressful situations
- How many minutes per day should you aim to be physically active?
 - At least 30 minutes per day. Adults need at least 30 minutes/day of physical activity and youth need to be active for at least 60 minutes per day.
- How does checking off project or daily tasks help reduce stress?
 - Make a list of what you need to do, then do one thing at a time and then check it off when it's completed. This helps you to stay organized and focused while providing a sense of accomplishment when a prioritized task is done.
- True or false- lack of sleep can be a symptom of stress, but it can also intensify feelings of stress.
 - TRUE
- True or False- Stress can cause physiological reactions in the body like headaches, constipation and sleep disturbances.
 - TRUE (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6296480/>)
- True or False. People who are under stress tend to lean towards unhealthy habits like eating foods that are high in fats, sugars and salt.
 - TRUE (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6296480/>)
- What is one way that you can reduce your stress?
 - Turn off phone, disconnect from social media, get plenty of sleep, exercise, get a pet, etc...

Warning Signs of possible Mental Health Issues

- What are 2 red flags regarding mental health that should cause concern?
 - Excessive sleeping
 - Difficulty sleeping or insomnia
 - Loss of self-esteem
 - Loss of interest in favorite pastime
 - Dramatic decline in academic performance
 - Personality shifts that are out of character
- Name 3 feelings that could be warning signs of a mental health issue.
 - Feeling very sad, hopeless and worthless
- True or False. Obsessively exercising, dieting or binge eating could be a sign of mental illness.
 - TRUE
- What 3 types of mental illness effect teens the most?
 - Depression, anxiety, and substance use
- Paranoia and excessive secrecy could be signs of what mental illness?
 - Depression
- Where does prescription drug use rank when compared to marijuana and alcohol use among teens?
 - Prescription drug uses ranks 2nd to marijuana and alcohol
- A person with an anxiety disorders often responds to situations with what feelings?
 - Fear and dread
- What is obsessive compulsive disorder?
 - Repeated, upsetting thoughts called obsessions- you do the same thing over and over again to try to make the thoughts go away.
- True or False. Mental health problems and substance abuse disorders don't occur together.
 - FALSE. Mental Health and Substance abuse disorders sometimes can occur together.
- Hallucinations and delusions are two examples of what kind of mental health illness?
 - Psychotic Disorders

<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/helping-children-cope-with-stress>

Confronting Teen Stress: Meeting the Challenge in Baltimore City. A guide for Parents, Teachers and Youth Service Providers. Center for Adolescent Health.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/the-teen-brain-6-things-to-know/index.shtml>

Mental Health Facts- Children and Teens. PDF. National Alliance on Mental Illness. www.nami.org.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/Pages/Mental-Health-and-Teens-Watch-for-Danger-Signs.aspx>

Closing remarks: According to the CDC, the number of youth ages 6-17 being diagnosed with depression and anxiety has increased from 5.4% in 2003 to 8.4% in 2011-2012

(<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>).

As parents, volunteers and older 4-H members who are mentors to younger youth, 4-H can be a safe haven from the stress that they are experiencing in their lives at home or school. For more information on Mental Health please check out the following websites and for hands on learning please look into Purdue's Youth Mental Health First Aid workshops located at <https://extension.purdue.edu/mhfa/>.

