

PRESS RELEASE

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SAFE TO TAKE A STAND

Mental Health Month is Opportunity To Speak Out

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JACKSON (May 14, 2015) – A 2012 community assessment found 17 percent of Jackson County residents reported having had mental health problems during the previous 12 months. With May being Mental Health Month, that statistic underscores the need to talk about mental health, according to the Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (JCSAPC).

“More than 50% of all Americans will meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health disorder at some point in their lifetime with half of these cases beginning by the age of 14,” said Janelle Buchler, Mental Health Coordinator at Jackson County Intermediate School District. “Mental health problems are more common than heart disease, lung disease, and cancer combined.”

Buchler cited the 2012 Community Health Assessment Report, conducted by Allegiance Health, which found that, of Jackson County residents with mental health problems, 25 percent experience depression and 17 percent experience anxiety.

A mental disorder or a mental illness is a diagnosable illness that affects a person’s thinking, emotions, and behavior and disrupts their ability to work or carry out other daily activities and have satisfying personal relationships. “Many individuals here in our own community suffer in silence while struggling with their mental health issues,” Buchler said.

People often suffer in silence because of embarrassment; lack of transportation; a fear of what their peers, family or friends will think of them, and their own negative attitudes about mental health. This suffering often creates long delays between when the illness starts and when one seeks help, Buchler said.

What can we do?

- Learn the real facts about mental illness
- Approach mental illness the same way we approach physical illness
- Look at our own mental health using screening tools like those provided at www.mhascreening.org
- Encourage people struggling with mental health issues to get help
- Incorporate positive self-help strategies into our own lives (e.g.: adequate sleep, physical activity, etc.)
- Start talking about mental health in positive and healthy ways

Be silent no more! Make it safe to take a stand and to speak out about mental health!

More information about:

- *Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition* and its activities, please contact Ravenn Moore at (517) 796-5133 or via email at rmoore@uwjackson.org
- *Project AWARE* and raising awareness about mental health, please contact Janelle Buchler at (517)787-5903 or via email at janelle.buchler@jcisd.org

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