

## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

### Suicide Facts

By ©liveandworkwell.com.

Last Reviewed: January 2013

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, suicide was the 11th leading cause of death in the United States in 2004. The highest suicide rates were for non-Hispanic white men over 85 years of age. However, suicide among young people is also high. Suicide was the third leading cause of death for 10- to 24-year-olds. More men than women die by suicide: almost four times as many.

#### Helpful Information

Suicide can be prevented. While some suicides occur without any warning, most do not. The most effective way to prevent suicide among loved ones is to learn how to recognize the signs of someone at risk, take those signs seriously, and know how to respond to them. The depression and crises that usually precede suicide are, in most cases, both recognizable and treatable.

- ▼ The number one cause of suicide is untreated depression. Although most depressed people are not suicidal, most suicidal people are depressed.
- ▼ The strongest risk factors for attempted suicide in adults are depression, alcohol abuse, cocaine use, and separation or divorce.
- ▼ The strongest risk factors in youth are depression, alcohol or other drug use, and aggressive or disruptive behaviors.

#### The Danger Signals

- ▼ Previous suicide attempts
- ▼ Talking about death or suicide
- ▼ Planning for suicide (i.e., putting affairs in order, giving away possessions, paying off debts, changing or creating a will)
- ▼ Depression (although most depressed people are not suicidal, most suicidal people are depressed)

#### Symptoms of Depression

- ▼ Depressed mood
- ▼ Change in appetite or weight
- ▼ Change in sleeping patterns



- ▼ Speaking or moving with unusual speed or slowness
- ▼ Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- ▼ Fatigue or loss of energy
- ▼ Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- ▼ Decreased ability to think clearly
- ▼ Thoughts of death, suicide, or wishes to be dead
- ▼ Changes in school or work attendance and performance
- ▼ Increased irritability or anger
- ▼ Avoiding contact with other people
- ▼ In children and adolescents: frequent complaints of physical illness such as headaches or stomach aches

#### Helpful Strategies

- ▼ **Take it seriously.** There may be warning signs given to a friend or relative.
- ▼ **Be willing to listen.** Take the initiative to ask what is the matter and don't be afraid to ask a depressed friend or relative if they are considering suicide or even if they have a particular plan in mind.

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# Mental Health Treatment of Children and Teens:

## *What Parents Need to Know*

By @liveandworkwell.com.

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Like adults, children and teens are not immune from behavioral health issues such as depression, eating disorders, ADHD, and anxiety disorders, among others. In fact, the 1999 Surgeon General Report on Mental Health concludes that

four million American youth have a major mental illness resulting in impairment at home, at school and with peers. That's 20 percent of all U.S. children. Fortunately, successful treatment methods are available to help children recover.

### When to Seek Treatment

Symptoms of mental illness in children and teens often manifest as drug or alcohol abuse, changes in sleeping habits, excessive complaints of physical ailments, angry outbursts, intense fear of weight gain, or other behavioral changes. When these symptoms persist or impair functioning both socially or academically, it may be time to seek help from a professional.

### Points to Keep in Mind When Seeking Treatment

Family involvement is critical to the child's recovery from a mental health condition. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to take an active role in the child's treatment, making decisions about the child's care, and in communicating any concerns to the treating clinician. Also, if hospitalization is necessary, studies show that it is best to treat children close to home. Treatment close to home not only enables parents and caregivers to be actively involved in the child's treatment, but also helps facilitate the child's smooth transition back to their day-to-day environment.

Through your benefit, you have the option of arranging care with a clinician in or outside the network. While the choice is always yours, staying in the network may help you get the best match, highest quality and lowest costs. By visiting an in-network clinician:

- ▼ Your out-of-pocket costs (copayments, deductibles, etc.) are generally lower.
- ▼ You receive no bills and file no claim forms.
- ▼ You can be sure that network clinicians have been evaluated to meet rigorous quality standards.

### First Things First

The first step is to contact your child's physician to rule out the possibility that a physical condition may be the cause of your child's symptoms. Then if behavioral health care is sought, contact OEAP for a referral to a mental health clinician specializing in treating children.

### Types of Treatment

If the child is functional and the family is able to provide sufficient support, then psychotherapy may be all that is necessary. Therapy gives the child the opportunity to deal with feelings, as well as examine and reframe the negative beliefs or distorted thoughts that caused the condition. For younger children or children who have trouble expressing themselves in speech, play therapy allows them to communicate their feelings. Evidence shows that children who are able to express themselves are less likely to act out negatively.

Another type of treatment, group therapy, helps children develop social skills that may lead to a greater sense of self-esteem and healthy well-being. In family therapy, family members are encouraged to recognize and modify behaviors that may exacerbate a child's mental health condition.

If the child's condition is particularly serious or if there is a threat of suicide or self-endangerment, hospitalization or antidepressant drugs may be required. While it is not a cure, medication can help the child function better. What's more, studies have shown that a combination of medication plus therapy is superior to therapy alone. The most common side effects of antidepressants are upset stomach, nausea, increased appetite, weight gain, bed-wetting, tremors and acne. Because these side effects, which are related to the dosage and type of medication, vary with each child, it is important for clinicians and parents to work closely together to determine the right dosage.

### Outlook

Since many mental health conditions are caused by a number of factors, it is difficult to predict which children will be affected. However, if symptoms are recognized and treatment started early, children and teens will be able to effectively cope with their mental health conditions and even overcome them.

# *Sending Your Child to Summer Camp*

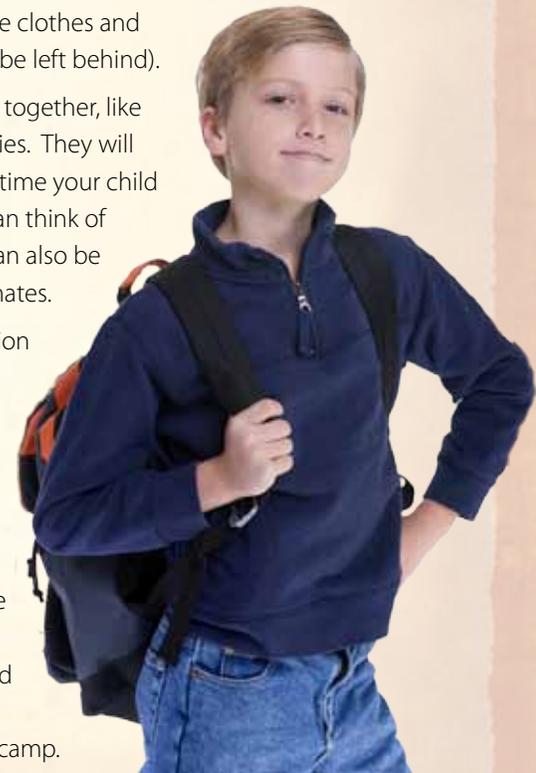
*By Parley International*

## *How to alleviate the fears and build the excitement...*

Summer camp can be an exciting and scary time for your youngster – here are some thoughts on how you can help your child get the most out of the experience.

When you first talk about camp, probably in winter time, summer seems like years away. All of the activities sound like more fun than trudging through snow or being in school. But as time for camp nears, anxieties may rise to meet the excitement of this new adventure. You can help your child keep “fun” in the spotlight and overcome those anxieties.

- ▼ Have your child help with the preparations by picking out the clothes and buying the supplies. This will help your child realize that this whole experience is designed for him or her to have fun and that the child has some say over what happens.
- ▼ When packing, include some things your child can use to create some personal, “homey” space in the cabin. Perhaps you can have a family picture blown up into a poster to put on the wall, and send along stuffed animals. (Remember during this selection process that some of the items which go to camp will not be coming back. So, maybe some favorite clothes and knickknacks should be left behind).
- ▼ Plan to make a treat together, like sugarless hard candies. They will keep well and each time your child has one she or he can think of home. The candy can also be shared with cabin mates.
- ▼ During this preparation time, talk about feelings. Reassure your child you will miss him or her. Encourage the child to talk about the things that cause anxiety and each time remind the child of all the fun things that can be done at camp.



## *Agency Spot Light*

This month the OEAP is featuring the Department of Veterans Services and two of its Ohio Veterans Homes. The following highlights some of the features of these two facilities:

### *Sandusky Home*

The Ohio Veterans Home in Sandusky is a 427-bed nursing home facility. Two levels of care are offered: standard care for those veterans in need of any intermediate level of care, and special care for veterans with Alzheimer’s disease and other types of dementia.

The home opened in 1888 to care for veterans of the Civil War, and has been in continuous operation since that time. It is located near Lake Erie, in the heart of Ohio’s family-friendly lakeshore attractions and recreational hub.

### *Georgetown Home*

The Georgetown home offers 168 beds for nursing home care, including a 21-bed hospice unit. Two levels of care are offered; standard care for veterans in need of any intermediate level of care, and special care for veterans with Alzheimer’s disease and other types of dementia.

The home opened in 2003, and is located in the scenic countryside of Brown County, offering a tranquil setting where veterans can feel at home. A small park on the grounds provides a venue for events held by local veterans’ service organizations.

Each of the homes offers a quality of life which emphasizes privacy, encourages independence, provides comfort and security, and meets social needs. For more information about these two facilities, please visit them at [http://dvs.ohio.gov/veterans\\_homes/sandusky](http://dvs.ohio.gov/veterans_homes/sandusky)



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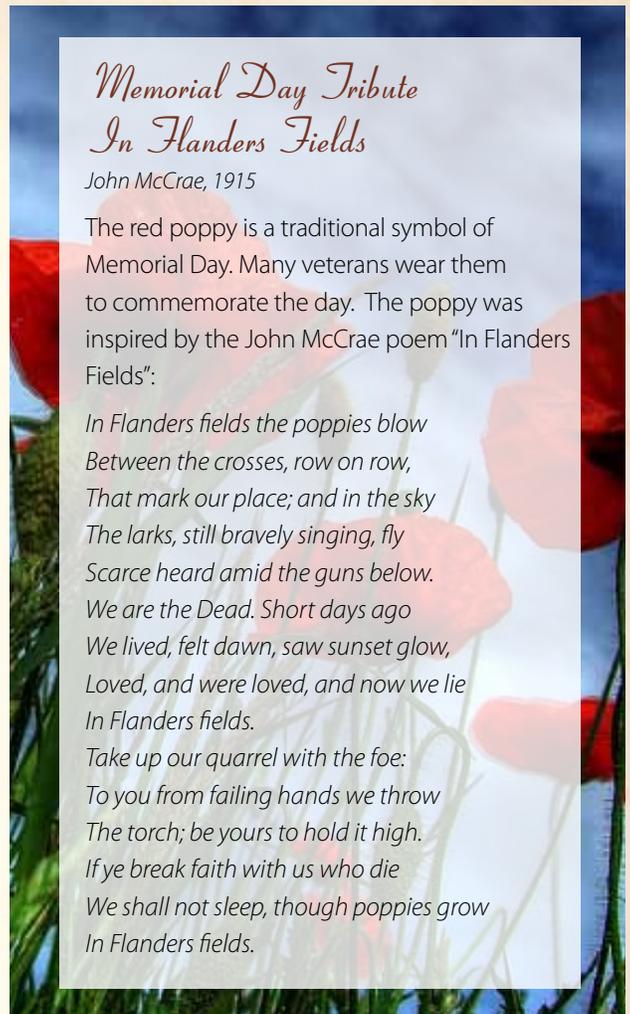
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- ▼ **Do not attempt to argue someone out of suicide.** Instead, let the person know that you care and understand that they are feeling very badly and that depression and suicidal feelings are treatable.
- ▼ **Seek professional help.** Encourage your friend or relative to seek professional help and help them follow through (i.e., you can go with them to the appointment).
- ▼ **If necessary, take the person to an emergency room or a walk-in clinic.** Don't leave the person alone until help is available. Remove any objects that could be used to commit suicide.
- ▼ **Help the person follow-up on treatment.** Make sure your friend or relative is continuing to see a licensed mental health professional. If medications are prescribed, make sure the person is taking them.
- ▼ For more information, please visit the following websites:

***The National Institute for Mental Health:***

- ▼ <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>
- ▼ The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: <http://www.afsp.org>
- ▼ Suicide Prevention Resource Center: <http://www.sprc.org>
- ▼ National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

If you are in a crisis, call (800) 273-TALK.



***Memorial Day Tribute  
In Flanders Fields***

*John McCrae, 1915*

The red poppy is a traditional symbol of Memorial Day. Many veterans wear them to commemorate the day. The poppy was inspired by the John McCrae poem "In Flanders Fields":

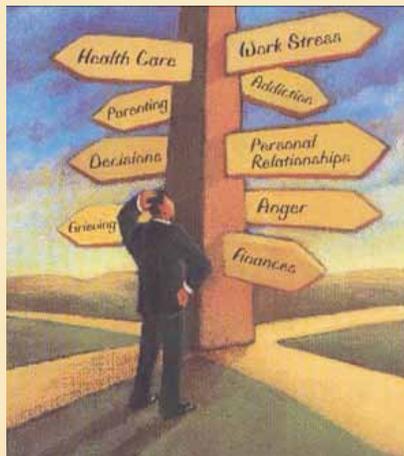
*In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.  
We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.  
Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.*

**Sending Your Child to Summer Camp continued from page 3**

- ▼ Get some input from other parents about their experiences with summer camp. This will help you identify and alleviate some of your child's concerns.
- ▼ Arrange for your child to talk with some peers who have gone to camp and to answer questions.
- ▼ Finally, send a care package several days before the child leaves. Your child will feel much better when she or he has been remembered on that first mail call.



Your employee assistance program offers confidential help for personal problems and concerns. Concerned about a troubled family member who won't get help? Feel tired and exhausted, but don't know if it's burnout, loss of motivation, depression, or all three? Late for work too often? Has use of alcohol or drugs created a crisis you are facing right now? The bottom line: Never wonder if your concern is suitable for the OEAP. So, if you've been putting off taking action to solve a serious issue that is weighing on you, give the OEAP a call today.



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