



KANE COUNTY
MENTAL HEALTH COUNCIL

making a difference ...together

Message of the Month

February 2010

www.kanecountymentalhealth.org

Kane County Mental Health Council

- The Association for Individual Development
630-966-4000
- Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center
630-859-6562
- Delnor Community Hospital
630-208-3000
- Ecker Center for Mental Health Services
847-695-0484
- Family Counseling Service of Aurora
630-844-2662
- Family Service Association of Greater Elgin Area
847-695-3680
- Gateway Foundation/Aurora
630-966-7400
- Greater Elgin Family Care Center 847-608-1344
- Kane County Health Department 630-208-3801
- Larkin Center 847-695-5656
- League of Women Voters
630-365-2138
- Mental Health & Mental Retardation Services, Inc.
630-892-5456
- National Alliance on Mental Illness, DeKalb, Kane-South, Kendall Counties, Inc.
630-896-6264
- National Alliance on Mental Illness-Kane County
847-931-4715
- Provena Mercy Medical Center
630-801-2657
- Provena St. Joseph Hospital
847-931-5521
- Senior Services Association
847-741-0404
- Suicide Prevention Services 630-482-9696
- TriCity Family Services
630-232-1070
- Visiting Nurse Association of Fox Valley 630-978-9835

Debunking childhood MH myths

There are many misconceptions regarding people having mental illness. During the next few issues of Message of the Month some of the "myths" that prevail in society's minds will be clarified in this column. The first two topics address the youngest of individuals with mental illness.

Myth: The parents are to blame if the child has a mental illness.

Myth: It is the responsibility of the school system to diagnose and treat children with mental illness.

Mental illness is a biological disorder of the brain that disrupts a child's thinking, feeling, moods and ability to relate with others. Mental illness is not caused by ineffective parenting strategies for guiding their child nor can it be caused by an accident that occurred to the child. Any child may exhibit mental, emotional or behavior changes because of chronic environmental stressors, but over time and with support for the child, generally the symptoms will subside. A child with mental illness will exhibit changes in behavior that may need greater support for an extended period of time to help the child cope with these same stressors. The child's primary care physician will refer the parent to a specialist who can make an accurate diagnosis through interview, observation and medical assessment. Local education agencies do not and should not diagnose any medical conditions including mental illness. If a child's family has concerns regarding their child's progress, the parents may request an evaluation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A child is determined to be eligible for services only if the problems the child is having adversely affect educational performance. A child with mental illness is eligible for a "504 Plan" to address medical needs regardless of the results of the Special Education eligibility determination. It is essential for parents, school personnel and child care providers to work together in providing effective and supportive programming for a child with mental illness.

Info Box:

Learn more about mental health and mental illness myths at:
www.ed.gov United States Department of Education
www.nimhinfo@nih.gov National Institute of Health
www.icmhp.org Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership
www.nami.org National Alliance on Mental