

How are the Children?



Suburban Ramsey
Family Collaborative

A Kids Matter! Parent Message **Keeping An Eye on the Emotional Pulse of Your Child**

We know that supporting our children's healthy development, both their physical and mental health, requires us to role model regular exercise, the use of stress reduction/stress-calming techniques and maintaining a balanced diet. One thing we may forget is the importance of role modeling good coping skills for stress and help-seeking behavior *early on* with our children and youth so they know it's ok to ask for help with the big things and the little things.

It's daunting to think that 1 in every 5 American children or adolescents have a mental health problem and at least 1 in 10 suffer from a severe emotional disturbance. What's more alarming is **only 1/3 of all children with a mental health disorder receive treatment.**

According to the Surgeon General and Department of Health and Human Services, **youth who have undiagnosed or untreated mental illness are 2 to 4 times more likely to have issues with substance abuse and almost 1/2 drop out of school.**

Often, depression in teens is overlooked because parents and others may feel that unhappiness or "moodiness" is typical in young people and blame hormones or other factors for teens' feelings of sadness or grief. This leaves many teens undiagnosed and untreated for their illness.

How to Know if Your Child Needs Help

Children go through many changes, especially during the teen years. Parents and family members are often the first to see signs that a child might be having problems with their emotions or their behavior.

The signs that could indicate your child may be having difficulties range from:

- Declining school performance, skips school or just doesn't want to go to school.
- Seems unusually sad or troubled by a major loss or event.
- Having trouble paying attention.
- Doesn't seem to have friends or has less friends.
- Pulls away from your regular family routine.
- Seems nervous, fearful, or stressed much of the time.
- Is uncooperative or defiant much of the time.
- Has lots of tantrums or outbursts of anger.
- Is using alcohol or drugs or experimenting with use.
- Is experiencing dramatic mood changes such as depression, sadness, and irritability.



*The
Suburban
Ramsey Family
Collaborative
(SRFC)
has developed a
KIDS MATTER
Parent Message
On
“Taking Action
To Prevent Suicide”*

*To access this message
go to:*

www.kidsmattersrffc.org

*To get a FREE Guide
from Suicide Awareness
Voices of Action (SAVE)*

ask for the

*“SRFC Parents as
Partners Guide”*

by emailing

Angie.Goserud@isd623.org

Know that many times, depression can mask itself as an inability to concentrate, inability to get out of bed in the morning, irritability, aggression or rage.

What Parents Can Do

- Consistently check your child's emotional pulse by taking a few minutes regularly to check in on them; letting them know you're interested and always there for them.
- If you are concerned about your child, spend extra time staying closer and being with them letting them know they can talk with you when they're ready. Being available and giving of yourself is the single most important thing you can do for your children.
- Share your concerns with other adults who spend time with your child, including teachers, coaches, youth leaders, etc. Tell these caring adults what you've seen, what your concerns are, and ask them to reach out with a listening ear and support your child.

When to Seek Professional Help

If you are worried about whether your child is struggling with anxiety, depression or other social-emotional or behavioral issues, think about these 3 questions: 1) How long has the behaviors that concern you been going on? 2) Are the behaviors severe? In other words, are they affecting your child's interest in participating in their normal daily activities? and, 3) How different is your child/ youth acting from his or her usual self?

If the behaviors that worry you are more frequent, more severe, and last beyond a several week period, seek professional help.

Resources

Talking to your family doctor or school staff is a good way to get connected to a mental health professional. Services are often covered by insurance. The following is a list of providers who work with youth and families in Suburban Ramsey County. They can bill insurance or use a sliding fee scale for payment. This list does not include the number of private therapists available in the community.

African American Family Services - 612-871-7878

Children's Home Society and Family Services - 651-635-0095

(CLUES) Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio- 651-379-4200

Northwest Youth and Family Services – 651-486-3808

White Bear Lake Area Community Counseling Center (serving White Bear Lake, Mahtomedi and Birchwood) - 651-429-8544

Family Innovations - 651-748-5019

Visit the [Help Me Grow Ramsey County website](#) for more information on supporting early childhood mental health.

Visit our [website](http://www.kidsmattersrffc.org) at www.kidsmattersrffc.org for more information on supporting your child's mental health.

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