

SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND BULLYING

Brought to you by INFONET, a subsidiary committee of the Metrocouncil of Community Mental Health Centers and Associations.

In recent years, violence has become the primary cause of death for American teens. Statistics show that one in six teachers and 25 percent of students have been the victim of a violent act that occurred in or around school. Elementary school students are just as likely as those in secondary schools to be the victim of a violent act. If we understand what leads to violence and how to effectively prevent it, we can make our schools safer.

WARNING SIGNS THAT SIGNAL A TROUBLED CHILD

Administrators, teachers, parents and students need to recognize warning signs of violence. Early warning signs are simply indicators that a child may need help and do not predict aggression/violence. When you recognize these warning signs, especially multiple warning signs, it is important to share the information with school officials, family and mental health professionals.

- History of discipline problems and violent or aggressive behavior
- Drug or alcohol use
- Gang membership or strong desire to be in a gang
- Access to and fascination with guns/weapons
- Threats of violence
- Uncontrolled anger
- Poor school performance and low school interest
- Disrespectful attitude of child
- Expressions of violence in writing/drawings
- Intolerance for differences/prejudicial attitudes
- Being a victim of violence or bullying
- Social withdrawal from friends and activities
- Feelings of isolation, rejection and being alone
- Lack of self-control

GETTING HELP

When you recognize warning signs of violence, whether it is your child, student or peer, be concerned and do something about those concerns. Intervention with the child should include input from the family, teachers, child and appropriate professionals.

INFONET AGENCIES

COMPREHENSIVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

10901 Winner Road, Independence, MO 64052
816-254-3652
www.thecmhs.com

JOHNSON COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

6000 Lamar, Mission, KS 66202
913-831-2550
www.jocogov.org/mentalhealth

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOC. OF THE HEARTLAND

739 Minnesota Ave., Kansas City, KS 66101
913-281-2221
www.mhah.org

REDISCOVER

901 NE Independence, Lee's Summit, MO 64086
816-246-8000
www.rediscovermh.org

SWOPE HEALTH SERVICES BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

3801 Blue Parkway, Kansas City, MO 64130
816-922-7645
www.swopehealth.org

TRI-COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

3100 NE 83rd Street, Kansas City, MO 64119
816-468-0400
www.tri-countymhs.org

TMC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

2200 Charlotte Street, Kansas City, MO 64108
816-404-5700
www.trumed.org

WESTERN MO MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

600 E. 22nd Street, Kansas City, MO 64108
816-512-4558

WYANDOT CENTER

7840 Washington Ave., Kansas City, KS 66112
913-328-4600
www.wyandotcenter.org

The following are tips on what to do when you observe warning signs of violence in a child:

- Inform all parties and listen to them when early warning signs are observed
- Maintain confidentiality and parents' rights to privacy
- Simplify staff requests for urgent assistance
- Make interventions available as early as possible
- Observe the setting in which the behavior occurs
- Build upon and coordinate internal school resources
- Provide training and support to staff, students and families in understanding factors that can set off aggressive outbursts
- Support students in being responsible for their actions. Teach the child problem solving and anger control skills
- Keep firearms under lock and key

GETTING HELP

In Kansas City, there is a network of mental health facilities that can help with these problems. The Community Mental Health Centers listed on the front of this flier provide treatment, referrals and support. For more information, visit our website at www.mentalhealthkc.org.

BULLYING: A LEADING CAUSE OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Recent incidents of school violence show that bullying can have tragic consequences. Nearly one-third of students say they bully or are victims of a bully. Each year, bullying causes 160,000 students to miss school.

How to Recognize Bullying

- Boys are more likely than girls to either bully or be bullied. Both use name-calling and threats, but boys are more likely to be physical, while girls tend to resort to spreading rumors and isolating outcasts.
- Bullies usually pick on others out of frustration with their own lives. They target other children because they need a victim who is weaker than they are.
- Bullies sometimes suffer from depression.
- Bullies are more hostile and also are more likely to smoke tobacco and drink alcohol.
- Bullies and victims of bullying tend to do worse in school.
- More children in the sixth through eighth grades report being picked on. Bullying appears to taper off significantly in the ninth and tenth grade. 17% of junior high school students admit to being victims of in-school intimidation, physical assault or robbery.

Warning Signs

Is your child at risk for being bullied? Below are warning signs that your child may be a victim of bullying.

- Physical and mental symptoms including insecurity, anxiety, depression and loneliness
- Poor self-esteem
- Poor relationships with classmates/difficulty making friends
- Over involvement of parents
- Lack of social skills
- Making excuses to avoid attending school
- Returning home with ripped clothing or looking messy
- Frequently "losing" lunch money and other personal belongings
- Rushing home to use the bathroom (which could mean child is avoiding the restroom at school)

If your child is displaying any of these symptoms, check with your child and his/her teacher to see what you can do to help.