

Children's Mental Health Week

May 6 – 12, 2012



The Parent/Professional Advocacy League invites you to join us in celebrating Children's Mental Health Week 2012.

Children's Mental Health Week was originally created by a group of parents in Missouri who wanted to fight stigma and raise awareness about the challenges our children, youth and families face.

PPAL brought Children's Mental Health Week to Massachusetts in 1996, and each year since it has grown in size, reaching more people with a message of dignity and inclusion.

The 2012 theme, "Youth Overcoming Trauma," reminds us that with challenge comes triumph, too.

Facts About Trauma

Psychiatric trauma is caused by a sudden event that brings fear or harm to a young person. Emotions and memories are stored in the brain and can lead to other emotional or behavioral problems. Trauma might take days, months or years to manifest.

Trauma-causing events include:

Witnessing or experiencing violence, War and terrorism, Natural Disaster, such as hurricane or fire, Medical Procedures, Accidents

Symptoms of Trauma might include:

Loss of sleep, On-going fear related to the event, Psychiatric problems like depression, Engage in destructive or aggressive behaviors, Struggle in school

What can we do?

Early intervention is critical. Enlist the help of a professional. Allow the young person to express their emotions and provide support and attention.

AACAP Resource for helping children after a disaster:
www.aacap.org/publications/factsfamdisaster.htm

Tips for Teaching Mental Health Awareness in Schools

PPAL encourages you to bring the message of Children's Mental Health Week to your school.

Parents, children and youth of all ages can participate in a variety of educational and awareness-raising activities, including:

- ✚ Host a contest: Essay/poster design for older students or a coloring contest for younger children
- ✚ Invite an individual or group to give a talk on mental health
- ✚ Encourage students and teachers to wear green
- ✚ Send students home with PPAL's Calendar of Facts or email directly to parents. Visit: ppal.net/about to request materials

Topics to consider:

- ✓ Bullying
- ✓ General topic on Mental Health
- ✓ Positive friendships
- ✓ Problem solving



Why Wear a Green Ribbon?

In 2007, the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health launched its Annual Green Campaign, one of their most important and visible awareness and education campaigns. The green ribbon is now a distinguishing feature in most Children's Mental Health Week publicity efforts. Wearing a green ribbon during Children's Mental Health Week is a positive way to show your support and solidarity with our mission to promote health, awareness and dialogue throughout communities nationally and internationally.

Stay up-to-date on events and updates for Children's Mental Health Week. In Massachusetts, we celebrate all month long! Visit www.ppal.net/about to learn more

Did you know ... ?

... Children's Mental Health Week is dedicated to increasing public awareness about the triumphs and challenges in children's mental health

... Children's Mental Health Week was started in 1991 by a group of parents in Missouri

... The Parent/Professional Advocacy League brought Children's Mental Health Week to Massachusetts in 1996

... The mayors of Lynn, Lowell, Waltham, Worcester and Newton have all committed to issuing an official proclamation for Children's Mental Health Week 2012

... Since 2002, the Governor of Massachusetts has issued an official proclamation for Children's Mental Health Week

Whereas, the citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts value their health and mental health and that of their families; therefore, they are proud to support observances such as Children's Mental Health Week; and

Whereas, one in five children has a diagnosable mental health disorder and one-half of all lifetime instances of mental illness begin before age 14; and even some children and youth with the most intense needs and some who are insured may not receive services; and

Whereas, children and youth with mental health needs in elementary, middle and high school are more likely to be bullied, absent, suspended, expelled or fail to graduate; and

Whereas, learning to recognize the early warning signs of mental health needs and where to obtain the necessary support, assistance and treatment gives children and youth better opportunities to lead full and productive lives; and

Whereas, the participation and partnership of family members in the assessment and treatment of children and youth is essential to positive outcomes; and

Whereas, our nation's future depends on the health and well-being of its families and their children; and

Whereas, Children's Mental Health Week was developed by families of children with emotional, behavioral and mental health needs, to focus on the needs of their children and families; in celebrating this year's theme: "Youth Overcoming Trauma" it is fitting to increase public awareness among all Massachusetts citizens of this important issue;

Now, Therefore, I, Deval Patrick, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim
May 6 - 12, 2012 as

Children's Mental Health Week