

National Association of Special Education Teachers (NASET)

THE PRACTICAL TEACHER

This Month's Topic:

Mental Health Resources

Introduction

There are many, many organizations and groups that deal with mental health. Often times, professionals and parents are unsure of where to turn or where to get information regarding children and adolescents with mental health related issues. This issue of NASET's Practical Teacher will help you find the one or ones that offer the type of assistance, intervention, or information you're seeking.

If It's a Crisis...

First things first, regardless of how frightening a note this is to begin on. If someone you know is having a mental health crisis and you need help fast, try the resources below that seem to fit the nature of the crisis.

Call 1.800.784.2433, the National Hopeline Network.

You'll be connected automatically to a certified Crisis Center near your location. Crisis Center calls are answered by trained counselors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In the event that the nearest Crisis Center is at maximum volume, the call is seamlessly rerouted to the next closest center. Callers should never encounter a busy signal or voice mail. For easy recall, remember this: 1.800.SUICIDE.

Call 1.800.273.8255, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

Another excellent resource is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which also provides access to trained telephone counselors, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For easy recall, think 1.800.273.TALK.

Visit the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) online.

AAC is dedicated to the understanding and prevention of suicide. For those seeking info and perspective on this difficult subject, including the warning signs and guidance on what to do, the association offers many publications that can help.

www.suicidology.org

Find a residential placement for an individual.

The American Association of Children's Residential Centers concerns itself with therapeutic living environments for children and adolescents with behavioral health disorders. You can take a look at AACRC's member list to see what types of residential centers are available to help children who need this sort of residence. Find these detailed descriptions online at: <http://www.aacrc-dc.org/members>

Quick Connections

Read NICHCY's fact sheet on Emotional Disturbance.

If you're looking for an intro to emotional problems and the mental health field, this is a good place to start. Our fact sheet will hook you up with organizations that can help, online and print resources of more information, and an overview look at disabilities that cause mental health concerns.

<http://www.nichcy.org/disability/specific/emotionaldisturbance/>

Find mental health resources and experts in your state.

<http://www.nichcy.org/state-organization-search-by-state>

Visit our state sheet page and select your state from the drop-down menu. The State Sheet will appear automatically. There are several places to look to find mental health connections.

In the 1st section, *State Agencies and Organizations*, look for listings headed “State Mental Health Agency” and “State Mental Health Representative for Children and Youth.” These are the state-level offices charged with providing assistance to individuals who have mental health concerns. They should be a good place to connect with the state mental health network and find out what’s what and who’s who in your state at the agency level.

In the 2nd section of the State Sheet, *Disability-Specific Organizations*, find the heading labeled “Mental Health.” Beneath are listed the state chapters of such associations as the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) and Mental Health America. These can connect you with local chapters, if there are any, and a wealth of info, including in-state resources. Often, these chapters operate as parent groups as well, offering parents opportunities to talk with other parents, an excellent source of emotional support and practical advice.

In the 3rd section of the State Sheet, *Organizations Especially for Parents*. If you're a parent looking for mental health connections for your child, try calling the organization listed under “Parent Training and Information Center” (PTI). The PTI can also tell you all about educational services for your child, special education, and working with your child’s school to make sure your child’s needs are addressed. Through the organization listed under “Parent to Parent” you can connect one-on-one with another parent in the state who also has a child with mental health concerns.

In the 4th section of the State Sheet, *Other Organizations*. On some state sheets, this section may list additional organizations that address mental health concerns. Glance over the section to see if that’s true for *your* state’s resource sheet.

Be Sure To Come Here

There are numerous sources of incredible information, support, and guidance on mental illness—across the gamut. We’ve listed a few starter links below where you can find out more about the range of specific mental disorders, interventions, family life, coping strategies, and much more.

NAMI, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

NAMI calls itself the “Nation’s Voice on Mental Illness” and is an invaluable source of information on the subject. In addition to the mountain of info you’ll find on NAMI’s site, you can also connect with state and local NAMI chapters.

www.nami.org

Mental Health America.

NMHA addresses all aspects of mental health and mental illness. Delve into their online resources about mental issues and identify NMHA affiliates in your area.

www.nmha.org

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP).

At the link below, you can find information on child and adolescent psychiatry, fact sheets for parents and caregivers, current research, practice guidelines, and managed care information, among other things.

www.aacap.org

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Behavioral and Mental Health are among the many topics AAP addresses through easy-to-read fact sheets and other resources. While you're there, also check out such areas as AAP's "Children's Health Topics," "The Parenting Corner," and "Professional Education and Resources," to name a few, and you'll find a wealth of info on mental health topics.

<http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/behavmenthlth.cfm>

Internet Mental Health.

Internet Mental Health is a free encyclopedia of mental health information.

<http://www.mentalhealth.com/>

Mental Help Net.

A vast amount of info here on specific mental disorders, mental health, wellness, and family and relationship issues and concerns.

<http://mentalhelp.net>

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health.

The masthead on the Federation's website says that the Federation, a family-run organization, is the "National Family Voice for Children's Mental Health." It has state and local chapters you can identify at:

<http://www.ffcmh.org/who-we-are/chapters-state-organizations/>

National Mental Health Information Center.

This service of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) provides information about mental health via a toll-free telephone number (1.800.789.2647), more than 600 publications, and a website located at:

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/>

While you're there, check out the listing of hotlines in the U.S. that deal with mental health issues.

Hotlines in English:

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/hotlines/>

Hotlines in Spanish:

<http://nmhicstore.samhsa.gov/espanol/lineas.aspx>

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

Another very rich resource. At NIMH, you'll find health info on a very wide range of mental health disorders; all about different medications; and the latest info on clinical trials and research. Find all this—and publications in English and Spanish—at:

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/index.shtml>

Finding Mental Health Services

Find mental health services.

Courtesy of the Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), the Services Locator at the link below connects you with comprehensive information about mental health services and resources useful for professionals, consumers and their families, and the public.

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/databases/>

Health care insurance for uninsured children.

Did you know that each state has a health insurance program for children? Children who don't have health insurance right now are very often eligible for state medical coverage. The insurance is available to children in working families, including families that include individuals with a variety of immigration status. To find out what your state's policies are, what's covered, and how to apply, call 1.877.543.7669 or find your state at:

<http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/state/index.html>

Medicaid benefits for mental health services.

If you're eligible for Medicaid, you may be able to access mental health services through Medicaid. States vary, however, in what types of mental health services they provide under Medicaid. Use the database at the link below to find what Medicaid benefits are available in your state.

<http://tinyurl.com/yhuos2j>

Mental Health in Schools

Mental health in schools.

Starting in 1995, two national training and technical assistance centers were established to improve how schools address barriers to learning and enhance healthy development. Each of these centers is a source of information and technical assistance regarding mental health in schools. Take advantage of each of their databases, materials, and expertise:

- Center for Mental Health in Schools, UCLA
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>
Under "Search and Quick Find" in the main menu, you can search the Center's resources for just about everything but the kitchen sink related to mental health in schools.
- Center for School Mental Health Assistance, University of Maryland
<http://csmh.umaryland.edu/>
This center maintains a library of resource materials including reprints, articles, and publications specific to school-based mental health. It also offers a comprehensive directory of school mental health programs around the world.

Project REACH: Resources for Teachers.

This website was created to provide teachers with interventions that will help to make their classrooms positive and productive environments for learning. The Project REACH staff has searched the research literature for interventions that are effective for improving the behavior and academic achievement of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. They then took the most effective interventions from the research and translated them into easy step-by-step directions for implementing them in your classroom.

www.lehigh.edu/projectreach/teachers/teachers_reach.htm

Organizations on Specific Disorders

Looking for info and assistance related to a specific mental condition? In addition to what you'd find by visiting the organizations listed above under "Be Sure to Come Here," look over the quick alphabetical list below of organizations that focus on a specific mental disorder. They offer in-depth information, support groups, and guidance regarding that disability—perhaps the one of concern to you.

Anxiety Disorders.

Visit the Anxiety Disorders Association of America (ADAA).

www.adaa.org

Behavior Disorders.

Visit NICHCY's Behavior suite for a detailed list of resources and organizations addressing behavior disorders and concerns.

<http://www.nichcy.org/schoolage/behavior/>

Bipolar Disorders.

If this is your area of concern, try these groups.

Child & Adolescent Bipolar Foundation (CABF).

www.bpkids.org

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA).

www.dbsalliance.org

Toll-free number: (800) 826-3632.

Dually Diagnosed: Mental Illness and Intellectual Disabilities.

www.thenadd.org

The National Association for Dually Diagnosed (NADD) focuses upon the needs and issues of individuals who have both mental illness and cognitive impairments or intellectual disabilities, and the professionals and families who share concern for these individuals.

Eating Disorders.

www.nationaleatingdisorders.org

The National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) works to prevent eating disorders and provide treatment referrals to those suffering from anorexia, bulimia and binge eating disorder and those concerned with body image and weight issues.

OCD, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.

www.ocfoundation.org/

The Obsessive-Compulsive Foundation (OCF) is for people with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and related disorders, their families, friends, professionals and other concerned individuals.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

<http://www.ptsdinfo.org/>

For more info and assistance on PTSD, you'll want to visit the Gateway to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Information.