STRENGTHENING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING

MAY 26, 2021
WEBINAR TIPS AND INFORMATION PART 1

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WEBINAR TIPS AND INFORMATION PART 2

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MENTAL HEALTH TOUCHES EVERYONE’S LIFE

Nicole Adler
Advocate & Motivational Speaker
TODAY’S WEBINAR

• Mental Health Education

• Panelists Discussion

• Family Empowerment Program

• Project Connect

• Resources
MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION

Jason Frey
Associate Marriage & Family Therapist
Private Practice

United Cerebral Palsy of the Inland Empire
Life without limits for people with disabilities
WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing (MentalHealth.gov).

Mental health disorders affect mood, thinking, and behavior. In children these are generally defined as delays or disruptions in developing age-appropriate thinking, behaviors, social skills or regulation of emotions (NAMI).
MENTAL HEALTH & COVID-19

Mental health conditions that were reported during the COVID-19 pandemic that were more common or increased:

• Symptoms of anxiety or depression
  o Women report at higher rates than men and children
  o Hispanic and Black adults report at higher rates
  o Younger adults (ages 18-24) report at higher rates than older adults

• Start or increase of substance abuse

• Stress related symptoms

• Suicidal thoughts / ideation

* Data obtained from the Center for Disease Control (April 2021) and the Kaiser Family Foundation (2021)
REASONS FOR THE INCREASE IN SYMPTOMS

• Isolation
• Concern for or loss of family and friends
• Lack of social engagement and social support
• Lack of access to COVID-19 testing and testing sites
• Disruption to routines (lack of access to health care & support staff)
• Inability to wear masks due to cognitive disability or health risks
• Unable to access telehealth (blind, cognitive delay, interpreters unavailable)

Photo by Stefano Pollio on Unsplash
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS IN ADULTS

Direct / Verbal / Obvious
- Persistent sadness (two weeks or more)
- Change in eating habits
- Overt acts
- Negative self-talk or self-harm
- Internet searches/resources
- Internet/social media addiction

Indirect / Non-verbal / Hidden
- Chronic pain/jaw pain
- Fatigue with lack of motivation
- Sleep problems
- Headache
- Nausea
- Weight loss or gain
- Excessive sweating
- Cavities (personal hygiene & side effects to medications)
- Tics
SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS IN CHILDREN AND TEENS

Direct / Verbal/ Obvious

- Persistent sadness (two weeks or more)
- Drastic changes in mood
- Out of control behavior (harmful)
- Talking about death or suicide
- Change in eating habits
- Internet searches/resources
- Internet/social media addiction

Indirect / Non-verbal / Hidden

- Withdrawal from things they usually found pleasure in doing….persistent boredom
- Poor school performance
- Feeling restless
- Regressive behavior (tantrums, bedwetting, or becoming clingy)
- Crying
HOW DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS CAN ASSIST

• Keep the person safe from health hazards
• Monitor behavior and maintain records of problems and progress
• Report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation
• Help with daily tasks and teach people easier tasks

As a direct support professional, you interact with the client daily and are one of the primary professionals in their medical and mental health team.
EMPATHY

In simple terms, empathy is the ability to understand things from another person's perspective.

- It involves experiencing another person's point of view, rather than just one's own, and enables prosocial or helping behaviors that come from within, rather than being forced.

- Empathy helps us cooperate with others, build friendships, make moral decisions, and intervene when we see others in need.
STIGMA AND CULTURAL FACTORS

Three main stigmas: Public, Self, and Institutional

• World Health Organization (WHO) identified stigma and discrimination towards mentally ill individuals as “the single most important barrier to overcome in the community.”

• The American Psychological Association states more than half of people with mental illness do not receive help for their disorders. Often, people avoid or delay seeking treatment due to concerns about being treated differently or fears of losing their jobs and livelihood.
WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

• Know your department/agency policy and seek supervisor guidance

• Mandated reporting – Have the phone numbers for CPS/APS on hand and the forms available.

• Self-care
MEET OUR PANELISTS

Elizabeth Grigsby
Consultant / Rights Advocate
The Arc of CA / Golden Gate RC

Elizabeth Katz
Member
Board of Directors
The Arc of California

James Peterson
Outreach & Engagement Specialist
Easterseals Southern California
FAMILY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

Graciela Cortes
Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist
Private Practice
WHAT IS THE FAMILY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM?

UCPIE’s Family Empowerment Program are facilitated group sessions to address common topics to address stress, anxiety and depression among parents of children with disabilities.

The program was developed after UCPIE’s respite program manager heard a common theme among families in UCPIE’s respite program. Parents often spoke about stress, lack of support and feeling overwhelmed. When looking for resources UCPIE found no support programs for parents existed. UCPIE’s respite manager set out to create a curriculum based on her expertise and from conversations with parents.
FAMILY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM: TOPICS

Topics

Some of the topics parents bring up during the program are how the parent's mental health is challenged by the demands of taking care of a child with extraordinary needs. A focus is placed on how a marriage or relationships are affected.

Photo by Aliko Sunawang on Unsplash
SESSIONS INCLUDE

1. You have the Power
2. Balancing Caretaking
3. Siblings Issues
4. Feelings
5. Taking Care of Yourself
6. Building a Healthy Relationship

Written by: Lizette Moreno, MA
WHAT DO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS LEARN?

• How to understand the common mental health challenges of being a parent of a child with disabilities.

• To recognize and address serious concerns.

• Minimize barriers to getting help and readily accessing resources.

• Dealing with the isolation and lack of services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

• How supporting mental health strengthens our community.
YOU HAVE THE POWER (1 OF 2)

• Recognize the difference between:
  o What we can and cannot control.

• The more we struggle with what is out of our control, the longer we prolong the negative feelings that are related to it.

• Once we recognize what we don’t have control over, we can take our own power back.
YOU HAVE THE POWER (2 OF 2)

• Strength is not determined by a circumstance

• Strength is determined by what we do with a circumstance

• In a difficult situation ask yourself:
  o What can I control in this situation?
  o What was my reaction to it?
NEGATIVE FEELINGS = NEGATIVE REACTION
POSITIVE THOUGHTS = POSITIVE ACTION
TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS (1 OF 3)

Some tips seem easier said then done, but to make it through you have to consider some of these tips for yourself to take care of others:

• **Take breaks:** schedule a few during the week, do not feel guilty to nap, read, have coffee with a friend, go shopping or anything else that will relax you.

• **Eat right:** always carry healthy nutritious snacks you enjoy such as granola bars, sandwiches, nuts, etc.
TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS (2 OF 3)

• **Exercise:** it will help you clear your mind, boost your energy and best of all improve sleep.

• **Stay organized:** keep all medical information about your child in one place, including appointments, important phone numbers, and insurance. It is a good idea to keep a notebook to keep all information in one place.

Photo by Sixteen Miles Out on Unsplash
TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS (3 OF 3)

• **Ask for help:** friends and family are likely to help you. You will be surprised how running an errand, doing laundry or just talking can benefit you and make a loved one feel useful.

• **Find a support group:** you can find information and local support groups related to your child’s condition or caregiving, by asking your child’s doctor, nurse or social worker.

• **Acknowledge your feelings:** there may be days when your child is sick and makes you feel angry or frustrated. You need to accept that you cannot always be in control of your child’s health and happiness.
WHOLE FAMILY SUPPORT: SIBLINGS

SIBLINGS

• Talk to them

• Be aware of their needs

If you are, at this time, not emotionally capable of talking to them or see their emotional needs, identify family members who can establish a special bond with them.

Photo by Charles Jackson on Unsplash
SPOUSE

Every relationship requires work, all effort and energy will make your marriage stronger and will make life easier and better for you and your children as well.

• Keep talking
• Work together
• Keep the spark
• Learn to listen
The UCPIE understands parents need time to accept and embrace the difference in caring for a child with disabilities and provide additional time at the end of every session to allow parents to share, bring up other topics, and support one another.
UCPIE CONTACTS

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PROJECT CONNECT

Teresa Anderson
Public Policy Director
The Arc / UCP California Collaboration
WHO IS PROJECT CONNECT?

The Arc of CA in Collaboration with Stony Brook University, School of Social Welfare
WHAT IS PROJECT CONNECT?

• Partnership between The Arc CA and Stony Brook University School of Social Work to provide mental health support to individuals with IDD/family members/direct support professionals
  o Launched November 2020

• Telehealth support line staffed by graduate students who are supervised by licensed social workers

• The hotline offers a wide range of supports – counseling, wellness checks, depression screening, and referral to community resources
There is a lot going on... We're here to support you!

24-Hour Disability Support Line

1(888) 847-3209

With all the challenges happening right now it is easy to feel overwhelmed, stressed, anxious, or a lot of other emotions. If you are a person with a disability, a caregiver, family member or provide support services and are struggling, call now! Counselors are available 24-hours, 7 days a week.

Resource referrals | Assessments | Ongoing wellness checks

An Initiative of Stony Brook University and The Arc of California
RESOURCES (1 OF 3)

PROJECT CONNECT
A telehealth support line for individuals with disabilities, their families, direct support professionals, and others who support individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Project Connect Website
(https://thearcca.org/project-connect/)

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS NETWORK OF CALIFORNIA
Improving lives for families of children with disabilities

Family Resource Centers Network Website
(https://frcnca.org/)
NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS

**NAMI** is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

If you or someone you know is struggling, you are not alone. There are many supports, services and treatment options that may help.

NAMI Website
(https://www.nami.org/Home)
RESOURCES (3 OF 3)

Wherever you are, whenever you need to talk with someone, CalHOPE is here.

Connect with CalHOPE by chat or phone.

Live Chat
(833) 317-HOPE (4673)

CalHope Website
(https://www.calhope.org/Pages/default.aspx)

211
Help starts here
211 connects you to expert, caring help. Every call is completely confidential.

211 Website
(https://www.211.org/)
Lunch and Learn

• Continue this conversation in a live, interactive session!
  • Friday, May 28
  • 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm
• Register now:
  LunchAndLearn.DisabilityThriveInitiative.org
DISABILITY SERVICES SUPPORT CENTER

- Free one-on-one or group assistance with accessing or delivering alternative services

- The Initiative provides direct support or makes the connection with a consultant who can help

Support.DisabilityThriveInitiative.org
Resource Library

Access the Resource Library and keep up with us:

DisabilityThriveInitiative.org

Email Updates

Sign up for email updates about the latest:

SignUp.DisabilityThriveInitiative.org
JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT WEBINAR

Change Management Strategies for Disability Services to THRIVE

Wednesday, June 9th
3:00 – 4:15 pm

Webinar.DisabilityThriveInitiative.org

Cambie las Estrategias de Administracion para que los Servicios ha Personas con Discapacidades PROSPEREN

miércoles, 9 de junio
3:00 – 4:15 pm

Webinar.DisabilityThriveInitiative.org
THANK YOU!

We look forward to seeing you at future webinars.

Find this webinar and other resources at:

DisabilityThriveInitiative.org

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