

Children's Mental Health Initiative

Serving Cass County, ND and Clay County, MN

2008 Children's Mental Health Initiative Goal

In September 2007, children's mental health stakeholders in Cass and Clay County met and brainstormed ideas on how to improve access to children's mental health services in our community.

The number one goal for 2008, as prioritized by summit participants is to **increase education and training for persons providing services for children on social-emotional development and early childhood mental health.**

A workgroup was established to help

plan and determine specific topics and presenters. The first training will be Thursday, May 8, 2008, and consists of a series of three sessions. The first session will identify normal social-emotional child development and warning signs for early childhood mental health issues.

The second training will concentrate on effective and practical behavior management techniques and parent advocacy.

The third will be specific to common childhood mental

health diagnosis, such as Depression, Anxiety and ADHD. The third training will also have a panel of professionals that will answer questions from participants.

Trainings are free of charge, with food and limited childcare provided. CEU's will be available.

Training Dates
Thursday, May 8th
6-8pm
Hjemkomst Center

Thursday, May 15th
6-8:30
Olivet Lutheran Church
(tentative location)

Thursday, May 22nd
6-8:30
Olivet Lutheran Church
(tentative location)



Winter 2008



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Children's Mental Health Week
May 4-10, 2008

Cass/Clay Children's Mental Health Fair

Thursday, May 8th 4pm—7pm

A Children's Mental Health Fair is scheduled for **Thursday, May 8th from 4-7pm**. The event is being held at the Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead, MN. Cass and Clay

children's mental health providers will have booths, providing information about their programs and children's mental health issues. The fair will address our goal of increasing

awareness and education, while decreasing mental health stigma in our community.

The event will also kick off the first session in the series of trainings.



Children's Mental Health Resource Guide



Do you seek information regarding the providers and services available for children's mental health issues in Cass and Clay County and how to access them? We have developed a resource tool that can help you find a provider/ agency to assist you. The Children's Mental Health Resource Guide for Cass and Clay County is now available in print copy and will soon be

available on-line at www.dakmed.org. The guide includes children's mental health services provided by each agency, the areas that each agency addresses, payment options accepted, contact information, hours available, etc.

If you would like to receive a Resource Guide, please contact Shawna Croaker at (701) 232-2452 or at rvcmh@sendcaa.org.

Key Tasks for Children's Mental Health Initiative

1. Develop a Children's Mental Health Advisory Board that meets quarterly to assist in guiding the initiative.
2. Implement an annual Children's Mental Health Summit to determine community goals for improving system access.
3. Inventory community resources and develop a Children's Mental Health Resource Guide available on-line and in print.
4. Build relationships with key children's mental health system stakeholders at the county and state levels in MN and ND.
5. Increase education and training for those providing services for children on social emotional



Children's Mental Health Advisory Board

This initiative is governed by a Children's Mental Health Advisory Board. The following Cass and Clay County stakeholders are board members:

- Access of the Red River Valley
- Attentive Mind
- Cass and Clay County Public Health
- Cass and Clay County Social Services
- Clay County Collaborative
- Clay-Wilkin & SENDCAA Head Start
- Dakota Family Services
- Dakota Medical Foundation
- Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo Schools
- Federation of Families
- Innovis Health
- Knowlton, O'Neill & Associates
- Lakeland Mental Health
- Local Advisory Council for CMH
- Lutheran Social Services of MN
- Mental Health America
- MeritCare Psychiatric Services
- Prairie St. Johns
- Rape and Abuse Crisis Center
- Red River Children's Advocacy Center
- Region V Children's Services Coordinating Committee
- Southeast Human Service Center
- The Village Family Service Center

Program Spotlight



The Explorer's Program at Kennedy Elementary Helps in Welcoming Immigrant and Refugee Children

As immigrants and refugees arrive in this community, traumatized children from war-torn countries are being sent to school ill-prepared for the overwhelming experiences they will face. In addition to the past traumas they have endured, they must spend their days surrounded by unfamiliar people, speaking an unfamiliar language in an unfamiliar land, and are expected to complete academic work that far exceeds their current abilities. These children often feel isolated, misunderstood, and unwelcome. Often times, this results in withdrawing from others even more, or acting out in anger and frustration. While school professionals have wonderful intentions, their requirement to provide education does not allow them to meet the great social and emotional needs of these children.

The Village Family Service Center, in collaboration with Fargo Public Schools, CHARISM, and other local agencies, received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to fund a school-based mental health program for refugee and immigrant children at Kennedy Elementary. Beginning in August 2007, this grant will run through the 2009-2010 school year. From this grant, the Explorer's Program was developed. This program includes a full-time School-Based Mental Health Professional and a full-time Skills Coach. Using the Narrative Model, the mission is to promote the well-being of children through the exploration of their experiences and the discovery of positive stories for themselves and others.

Immigrant and refugee students in grades 3-5 are involved in individual and group sessions where they focus on discovering strengths, developing goals, building relationships, facing challenges, recognizing moral character, and honoring their personal and family histories. In addition to these structured sessions, all students at Kennedy Elementary receive skills coaching in the less structured times of the day, such as upon arrival, at lunch and recess, and at dismissal time. Skills coaching involves helping children come up with acceptable solutions in the early phases of a conflict, as it occurs, rather than imposing traditional discipline after an altercation has transpired. This is in effort to help children learn to regulate their behaviors and recognize the impact they may have on others, both positive and negative, and to build their conflict resolution skills. The combination of individual and group session, together with skills coaching, seems to be having a positive impact on the children and the climate of the school.



Did you know?

Federation of Families offers a support group for parents, grandparents or caregivers of children with mental health needs and/or emotional behavioral disorders on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 7pm. Groups meet at 1104 2nd Ave S. 2nd floor, Suite 333. For more information, call Deb at 235-9923. Come and know you are not alone!

Childhood Depression

According to the Federal Center for Mental Health Services, depression affects one in 33 children and one in eight adolescents.

The following symptoms in children may indicate depression:

- Frequent sadness, tearfulness, or crying
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Lack of enthusiasm or motivation
- Decreased energy level
- Major changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased irritability, agitation, anger, or hostility
- Frequent physical complaints such as headaches and stomach-aches
- Indecision or inability to concentrate
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
- Extreme sensitivity to rejection or failure
- Pattern of dark images in drawings or paintings
- Play that involves excessive aggression, or sad themes
- Recurring thoughts or talk of death or suicide

Event Calendar Winter/Spring 2008

February

Thursday, Feb. 7, 11:30am-3:30pm, Julia Dinsmore "Beyond Good Intentions" Workshop for parents and professionals, Courtyard by Marriot, Moorhead, MN

Tuesday, Feb. 26, 6-8pm, "Say Yes to No," discussion groups on Dr David Walsh's book "No," Hjemkomst Center

March

Saturday, March 8, 8am-4:30pm, MeritCare Parents Fair, Fargo Civic Center

Thursday, March 27, 9am-3:30pm for professionals, 7-8:30pm for parents "Parenting on Purpose Red-Yellow-Green Framework for Respectful Discipline," Fargo Holiday Inn

April

Tuesday, April 8, 15 and 22, 5:30-7pm "I'm a Positive Parent" series, Lodoen Center, West Fargo

May

Saturday, May 3, 9am-3:30pm, Dr. David Walsh, "No, Why Kids of All Ages Need to Hear It," Ramada Plaza Suites

Thursday, May 8, 4-7pm, Cass/Clay Children's Mental Health Fair, Hjemkomst Center

Thursday, May 8, 6-8pm, CMH Training, Social-Emotional Development and Warning Signs for Early Childhood Mental Health, Hjemkomst Center

Saturday, May 10 "Miles for Mental Health Walk," Lindenwood Park, Fargo, ND

Thursday, May 15, 6-8:30pm, CMH Training, Practical Behavior Management Techniques and Parent Advocacy, Olivet Lutheran Church, Fargo, ND (tentative location)

Thursday, May 22, 6-8:30pm, CMH Training, Early Childhood Diagnosis and Question/Answer Panel, Olivet Lutheran Church, Fargo, ND (tentative location)

MISSION

To facilitate collaboration among children's mental health providers and referral sources, deliver children's mental health community education, and assess, monitor, and evaluate current children's mental health services in Cass County, ND and Clay County, MN.



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