



At-Risk Behaviors from a Developmental Point of View

Christine Storm, MPH
Caron Treatment Centers
Cstorm@caron.org



Developmental Domains



- Cognitive: the ability to think critically and creatively
- Language: the ability to understand and express, both verbally and through writing
- Psychological/Emotional: self-awareness and self esteem; managing emotions
- Social: ability to develop and maintain healthy relationships
- Physical: physical health and well-being
- Ethical: knowledge and practice of appropriate and acceptable behaviors

Elementary Age Stressors



- School: being away from home, worry about getting along with peers, worry about making friends, friend groups, schoolwork, fear of being different, transitions, bullying
- Cyber bullying/social media
- Conflict at home
- Activities/responsibilities
- Performing: sports, music, dance
- Divorce/changing families
- Death or illness: family member, pet
- Family addiction
- Moving to a new town or school



Concerning Behavior in Elementary Age



- Poor impulse control
- Noncompliance with rules
- Academic failure and low commitment to school
- **Peer rejection**
- Lack of empathy
- **Aggression**
- Lying; stealing (antisocial behaviors)
- Poor emotional self-regulation
- Harming or threatening themselves, other people or pets
- Damaging or destroying property



Early Risk Factors for Drug Abuse

- a lack of attachment and nurturing by parents or caregivers
- early abuse
- ineffective parenting
- a caregiver who abuses drugs
- aggressive behavior, lack of self-control, or difficult temperament
- poor classroom behavior or social skills
- academic failure
- association with drug-abusing peers
- drug availability
- beliefs that drug abuse is generally tolerated

The Importance of Early Intervention



What POSITIVE OUTCOMES can be expected from early intervention services that address these challenging behaviors?

- Decreased risk of withdrawal, aggression, non-compliance, and disruption
- Treatment impact on fears, phobias, depression, anxiety, hyperactivity, conduct, and obsessive-compulsive disorders
- Positive peer relationships including understanding of friendship, cooperation, and sharing
- Increased self-control, self-monitoring, and self-correction and improved social-emotional health
- Academic success
- Reduced risk for teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency and other struggles in adolescence

Adolescent Stressors & Challenges



- Identity struggles
- Puberty- physical and emotional changes
- Peer pressure & experimentation
- Trying out “adult” behaviors
- Varying levels of maturity
- Self-consciousness; uniqueness can be seen as a deficit
- Cliques, popularity, bullying and other social issues
- Conformity to group norms
- Struggle intellectually with cause and effect relationships
- More broken homes, familial substance abuse, and other societal stressors

Could it be Depression?



Different people experience different symptoms of depression. Someone who is depressed may feel:

- Sad, Anxious, Empty, Hopeless, Guilty, Worthless, Helpless, Irritable, Anger, Restless

They may also experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- Loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy
- Shutting down and withdrawing from people and activities
- Lack of energy
- Problems concentrating, remembering information, or making decisions
- Problems falling sleep, staying asleep, or sleeping too much
- Loss of appetite or eating too much
- Thoughts of suicide or suicide attempts
- Aches, pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not go away.

Depression in adolescence frequently co-occurs with other disorders such as anxiety, disruptive behavior, eating disorders, or substance abuse. It can also lead to increased risk for suicide.

Defined



- Risk Factors (Internal & External)



- Protective Factors (Internal & External)



Activity



2 Steps Forward....One Step Back



Resilience



“The child who can manage impulses and strong emotions, show concern for others, think and communicate well, and optimistically persist in the face of difficulty is a child who is apt to face life’s challenges constructively.” - CDC

Concept of Resilience



RAW EGG PEOPLE



- ✓ Quit too easily
- ✓ Have poor stress response
- ✓ Overwhelmed by negative thoughts
- ✓ Lack self-control
- ✓ Don't see things realistically
- ✓ Don't celebrate their little victories
- ✓ Don't always see the humor in life
- ✓ External locus of control
- ✓ Poor emotional health

SUPER BALL PEOPLE



- ✓ Deal more effectively with stress and peer pressure
- ✓ Are optimistic about their future
- ✓ Cope with everyday challenges
- ✓ Bounce back from disappointments, adversity, + trauma
- ✓ Develop clear and realistic goals
- ✓ Solve problems
- ✓ Relate comfortably with others
- ✓ Treat oneself and others with respect
- ✓ Emotional intelligence

Parent Resources

- Health.montcopa.org/PIRG
- National websites like
www.drugfree.org
www.search-institute.org
www.parentfurther.com
www.nami.org
- LMTSD Student Assistance Program (SAP)

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PARENT AND INFANT RESOURCE GUIDE

*A reference guide of services
to help families and agencies in
Montgomery County*

Sponsored by the
Montgomery County Alliance for Healthy Babies
and Montgomery County Health Department

Montgomery County Personal Navigator Program
Visiting Nurses Association Community Services
Connecting people to health and social services
For information call 1-800-591-8234 (Bi-lingual Assistance)



The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia is conducting The National Children's Study in Montgomery County. This study is examining the effects of the environment on the health and development of our children. If you are pregnant and want to learn more about the study, please contact us at 1-877-627-2345 or NSC@email.chop.edu. Compensation is provided for participants.

Para Asistencia en Español Llame ACLAMO Norristown: 610-277-2570
Pottstown: 610-970-2134 TDD: 610-631-1211

To download a copy of this guide, visit our web site: health.montcopa.org/PIRG

The Role of the SAP Team



- Aim to reduce barriers to learning
- To identify and support high risk students
- Determine if the presenting problem lies within the scope of the school or if outside services are necessary
- Make recommendations to assist the student and the parent
- Assist the student and parent accessing services
- **NOT Crisis Response**



Reasons You Might Make a Referral



- Observed behaviors indicative of possible drug and alcohol usage
- Observed behaviors indicative of possible mental health concern
- Child/teen recently experienced a loss (death/divorce/home)
- You are noticing changes in a child/teen that are a cause for concern (attendance, motivation, appearance, attitude, academic and/or personal success)