



School Based Mental Health Services— Going Where the Children Are

Like most states, South Carolina has an acute need for mental health services for children, adolescents and their families. The range of psychological, educational, family and neighborhood problems affecting children, especially those with serious emotional disturbances or those in crisis, is extremely complex.

Developing services to address these problems requires a variety of resources that no agency alone could provide. The needs are many — finding adequate funding, initiating or strengthening relationships between mental health centers and communities, overcoming stigma, networking with other child service providers and adequately training mental health professionals — to name a few.

One way that the South Carolina Department of Mental Health (DMH) is meeting these needs is through its school based programs.

Under these programs, mental health professionals from community mental health centers set up their offices in schools in order to provide intensive, comprehensive services that are highly flexible, easily accessible and integrated into the

everyday settings of children and their families.

Several DMH community mental health centers began these services on a limited basis more than 15 years ago, but it wasn't until 1994 that DMH formalized its efforts by collaborating with the University of South Carolina's Institute for Families in Society and several other USC departments to develop a School Based Mental Health Project.

The school-based mental health programs have grown consistently each year since 1993 to over 500 schools in our state. DMH has been able to develop programs easier in urban and rural areas that already have some resources where there is seed money to develop programs. Seed monies come from various areas: state and federal grants, local foundations, county and city government, community businesses and corporations. The school-based programs are sustainable within 2-3 years and the seed monies are no longer needed in most areas due to reimbursement mechanisms developed through Health and Human Services. However, rural communities that do not have any resources have not

been able to secure seed funding to start up the school-based mental health programs. DMH: Division of Children, Adolescents and Families: School-Based Services has continually sought grants to offset the imbalance of funds in these rural areas. Sadly, many grants are no longer available and the funds for such programs have decreased each year for the last six years. Funding streams that once provided monies for school based programs no longer exist.

Rural communities in the "Corridor of Shame" area of our state do not have resources to fund such programs. There is a great need for other communities, businesses, organizations, foundations, etc. to help those less fortunate in our state and provide resources for those children, youth and families that are hurting physically, emotionally and financially. Imagine the added difficulty for those suffering from mental and emotional illnesses and parents seeking resources for their children where there are none. A feeling of hopelessness ensues thus increasing the issues of emotional distress. *Reprinted with permission, SCDMH, The Focus, & Beth Freeman, Program Director, School Based Mental Health Services.*

Please visit the Federation of Families of SC new website!

<http://www.fedfamsc.org>

Our website has been redesigned and will be regularly updated. Information for community family contacts are available as well as events, information, our quarterly newsletter and web-links. We will continue to improve our website based on your feedback. Please let us know what you like and what information you need.

Please note that Staff email addresses have changed:

General email address: **info@fedfamsc.org**

Diane Revels Flashnick, Director: **diane.flashnick@fedfamsc.org**

Crystal G. Bivens, Project Coordinator: **crystal.bivens@fedfamsc.org**

Brenda Dease, Outreach Coordinator: **brenda.dease@fedfamsc.org**

Phone: 803-779-0402 , in Columbia 866-779-0402-Toll-free

How To Find Your Legislator

This Winter Edition of Support Matters is dedicated to educating families and professionals about school based mental health services and the benefits to families, communities and our state. Pages 3 and 4 , an insert, provides facts and information about school based mental health services in SC accompanied by a parents story and quotes from others. This insert is being provided in hopes that you will take the time to contact your Senators and Representatives to educate them on the facts and ask them to make sure that the SC Department of Mental Health budget request for \$1 million dollars, to expand school based mental health services, remains in the SCDMH proposed budget. To find your Legislators go to: **<http://www.sc.gov>** , then Legislative Branch, Legislative Resources, Find Your Legislator, or for help call the Federation office.

Upcoming Events and Information.

Part-Time Position Available!

The Federation of Families of SC has a new position available for a part-time Outreach Coordinator.

First preference will be given to a parent, grandparent, foster parent or other individual who is the caregiver of a child or adolescent with an emotional or behavioral disorder.

This individual will work with and provide training for other family members in communities in South Carolina.

You must have good communication skills, reliable transportation and child care and be able to base your work from the Columbia office. Please mail your resume and experience to:

**Federation of Families of SC
PO Box 1266
Columbia, SC 29202**

SOUTH CAROLINA YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM.

“ VOICES OF TOMORROW ”



FRIDAY MAY 5, 2006

The Youth Leadership Forum is a leadership training institute for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities. Delegates from around South Carolina will be selected through an application process. Those students who are chosen should demonstrate leadership potential, community involvement and strong academic abilities.

To nominate a student please visit the following websites

<http://www.palmettodcdt.org> ~or~ <http://www.scvrd.net>

Save The Date!

Important dates and information from The Federation of Families of South Carolina.

Making It Real: Help, Hope & Resiliency for Children and Families.

Children, Adolescent and Families System of Care Conference

May 18-19, 2006

Brookland Conference & Resource Center
1066 Sunset Blvd.
West Columbia

For Conference updates and Parent Scholarship information go to:

<http://www.fedfamsc.org>

or call the Federation of Families of S.C. 1-866-779-0402

S.C. Assistive Technology Expo 2006

**Thursday March 30, 2006
9:00-4:00**

Columbia Metropolitan
Convention Center

Free and Open to the Public
Registration opens at 9:00am

Children who are mentally and emotionally healthy are more successful academically and socially. We support the expansion of mental health services in schools so that families, schools, and mental health professionals can more effectively work together to improve behavioral and academic outcomes for children and youth.

Current Issue: Mental Health services are not available to the majority of students who might need them. Mental health problems are real. They affect one's thoughts, body, feelings, and behavior. Mental health problems commonly seen in children and youth include depression, bipolar disorder (manic-depressive illness), attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, schizophrenia, and conduct disorder.

In South Carolina 135,000 students experience mental health issues. Of these, only 47,000 currently receive services. ***Eighty-eight thousand South Carolina students have mental health issues that are not addressed.***



A Solution: Expand mental health services in schools

Providing mental health services in public schools is an efficient and effective way to address unmet mental health needs. Receiving services at school helps integrate those services into school so that students are more likely to be academically successful. Students receiving mental health services in schools feel less stigmatized, and are more willing to seek help.



The benefits of school based mental health services

- 96% of students stay out of trouble
- 99% of students remain in school
- 99% of students continue to live with their family at home
- 90% of families and youth feel very positive about the services
- 98% of school administrators feel very positive about the services

Expand the availability of school based mental health services

One of the four priority goals of the South Carolina Department of Mental Health for the year beginning July 1, 2006 is a request for \$1,000,000 to expand school-based mental health services. These funds would be targeted as follows:

- Services would be provided to additional middle and alternative schools in twelve rural counties of the state.
- The counties include Bamberg, Calhoun, Chesterfield, Clarendon, Dillon, Georgetown, Kershaw, Lee, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Sumter, and Williamsburg.

A Mother's Story.

When my son, Nick turned 16, he became out of control. Often shouting profanities and throwing things at me. We sent him to the Alternative school in Chapin, S.C. and to make a long story short, he tried to commit suicide.

Moving my son to Ware Shoals High School was the answer to our prayers. When we got my son settled into the new school we tried to call the psychiatrist office that our doctor in Columbia referred us to; they could not see my son for 6 months and that was based on once they got his medical records from our doctor in Columbia, whether they would even accept him or not. Understand, this was still a child in crisis! I couldn't wait 6 months to get him in with a doctor and I didn't want to use the emergency room as his doctor! We called our doctor back in Columbia and he referred us to Beckman Mental Health in Greenwood.

When I called their office they asked me if I'd ever heard of School Based Mental Health

Services, which I had not. It was wonderful to learn that my son could see a counselor at school as well as a psychiatrist. We had nothing like that in

Columbia. I can honestly say that my son's counselor saved his life. Not only did she keep him on an even keel, she taught me how to deal with him and his outbursts so that I did not get hurt.

“If it were not for the school based services my son would not be where he is today.”

-A Mother's Story

Mental Health Counselors can eliminate a problem before it gets out of hand or before the child gets suspended in a lot of cases. When I had an urgent problem, I was never told, you have to make an appointment, my problem was handled immediately.

In May of 2004, my son at the age of 20, graduated from Ware Shoals High School. This was a day a few years earlier that I honestly thought I'd never see. My son is now working for the SC Dept of Corrections, instead of being an inmate at the SC Dept of Corrections! He is also taking classes to become a firefighter. He volunteers now for Hickory Tavern Fire Department!

Terri Mostiller

“Research shows that early intervention is not only the right thing for the child, but it also reduces the long-term financial consequences for families, providers and the state.”

**-John Connery
SC Department of Mental Health
Interim State Director**

“The school counselor, mental health counselor, teacher and school psychologist... worked as a team with us and with my child to help her cope with school transitions in the special education classroom. They valued our opinions as parents. If we had not had their help at the school our child would have become a dropout because she hated school and had no hope. Now, she likes school and looks forward to going each day. The mental health counselor helped us with our family issues and we are much stronger today as a family and as parents.”

**-Parent
Lexington-Richland School Dist. 5**

“I used to think of killing myself and thought nobody cared. I couldn't talk to my parents. I told a friend and he told the teacher. I was mad that he told, but when the teacher helped me see the mental health counselor at school I found that there were some people who cared. The counselor helped me understand my depression and get the help I needed to feel better ... and he helped me talk with my parents about my depression. Now I actually feel normal again.”

-South Carolina Teen

“Children come to school each day with a myriad of issues. Our school resources are stretched very thin, and we often don't have personnel qualified to deal with serious mental health issues. As educators it behooves us to provide as much support to our students as we can at an early age to assist them not only in achieving academic success, but in becoming strong mentally healthy adults.”

**-Richland School
District One Principal**

Helping the Child Who is Expressing Anger

When you hear about children killing other children, you may think, "I don't know a single child who could do such a thing."

Too often the daily news confirms that children and teens can be violent, even deadly. As parents, families, teachers and members of the community, what can we do to help children cope with angry feelings--from frustration to rage?

Some young people turn to violence, because they do not see other ways to endure what they are feeling at that moment. They may not anticipate the repercussions of their violence.

These tips may help when you recognize a child who is withdrawing or exploding over everyday frustrations:

- Listen to what the child is saying about his or her feelings and be willing to talk about any subject. Young people today are dealing with adult problems such as love, sex, relationships, failure and rejection. Unfortunately, their minds and bodies simply are not ready for these stresses.

- Provide comfort and assurance. Tell the child that you care about his or her problems. Show confidence in his or her ability to tackle life's ups and downs.

- Tell the child that everyone experiences anger. Tell him or her about the last time you felt really angry and how you dealt with that anger in a positive way.

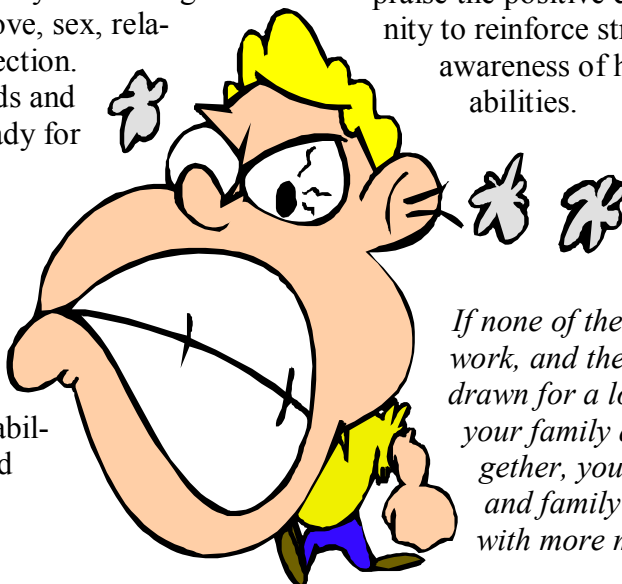
- Encourage the child to shift gears—to spend some time doing things he or she really likes to do—playing sports, walking someone's dog, or reading a book. A different activity can refocus

thoughts and help alleviate some of the angry feelings.

- Teach basic problem-solving skills. When upsetting situations arise, the child who has practiced these skills will be more likely to think through the consequences of different actions and will, ultimately, make a better choice than violence.

- Look at how you handle your own anger. Are you setting a good example? Would you want to be imitated by a child who admires you?

- Acknowledge good behavior. When a child deals with his or her anger in a positive way, praise the positive choice. Take every opportunity to reinforce strengths. Build the child's awareness of his or her own talents and abilities.



If none of these approaches seems to work, and the child stays angry or withdrawn for a long time, seek help. Talk to your family doctor or pediatrician. Together, you may decide that your child and family need help from someone with more mental health training.

Free information about children's and adolescents' mental health is available from the CARING FOR EVERY CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH: Communities Together public education campaign of the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Call 1.800.789.2647 or go to www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/child/ on the Internet

How Families Can Help Children Cope With Fear and Anxiety.

Whether tragic events touch your family personally or are brought into your home via newspapers and television, you can help children cope with the anxiety that violence, death, and disasters can cause.

Listening and talking to children about their concerns can reassure them that they will be safe. Start by encouraging them to discuss how they have been affected by what is happening around them. Even young children may have specific questions about tragedies. Children react to stress at their own developmental level.

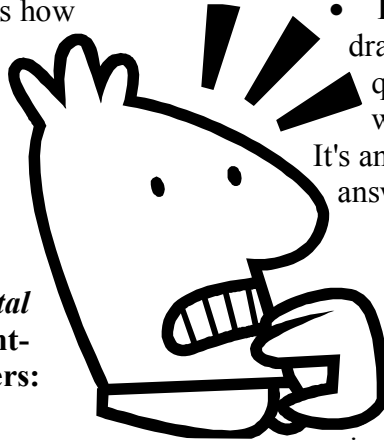
The Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign offers these pointers for parents and other caregivers:

- **Encourage children to ask questions.** Listen to what they say. Provide comfort and assurance that address their specific fears. It's okay to admit you can't answer all of their questions.



- **Talk on their level.** Communicate with your children in a way they can understand. Don't get too technical or complicated.
- **Find out what frightens them.** Encourage your children to talk about fears they may have. They may worry that someone will harm them at school or that someone will try to hurt *you*.

- **Focus on the positive.** Reinforce the fact that most people are kind and caring. Remind your child of the heroic actions taken by ordinary people to help victims of tragedy.



- **Pay attention.** Your children's play and drawings may give you a glimpse into their questions or concerns. Ask them to tell you what is going on in the game or the picture. It's an opportunity to clarify any misconceptions, answer questions, and give reassurance.

- **Develop a plan.** Establish a family emergency plan for the future, such as a meeting place where everyone should gather if something unexpected happens in your family or neighborhood. It can help you and your children feel safer.

If you are concerned about your child's reaction to stress or trauma, call your physician or a community mental health center!

The Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign is part of The Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services Program for Children and Their Families of the Federal Center for Mental Health Services. Parents and caregivers who wish to learn more about mental well-being in children should call 1-800-789-2647 (toll-free) or visit www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/child/ to download a free publications catalog (Order No. CA-0000). The Federal Center for Mental Health Services is an agency of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Community Parent Groups

The Federation of Families of SC assists many parents of children with emotional, behavioral, or mental health disorders establish community parent groups. For others we provide information and technical assistance.

If you are the parent of a child or adolescent who is having emotional or behavior problems that have you concerned or if your child has been identified with a mental health disorder, join other families who will understand what you and your family are experiencing.

Attending a meeting with other families experiencing similar situations at home, in school and with agencies and professionals can be a comforting experience for parents who have felt they were the only parents having such an experience with their child.

If there is not a group listed in your community please call our office toll free at 1-866-779-0402. We may be able to connect you with other parents in your community. If you live in one of the areas below you may contact the group facilitators listed directly.

Anderson County

Anderson County Library
Room C
3rd Thur 7:00-9:00 pm
Lisa Fant (864) 261-9970
Jimmie Craig (864) 338-0227

Beaufort County

Call for time and place
Loraine Tascoe-Bey (843) 322-5414

Beaufort County

Call for time and place
Rita Jaklitsch (843) 706-2395
Sharon Brown (843) 757-7107

Chester County

Call for time and place Katherine Caldwell (803) 581-7672

Fairfield County

Winnsboro
3rd Tuesday 11:00 – 1:00 pm
Shirley Green (803) 635-6086

Florence County

Florence/Darlington
Aroma Underground
Celebration Avenue
2nd Saturday 8:00-9:00 am
866-779-0402 for more info

Georgetown County

Georgetown/Andrews/Pawley's Island
Call for time and place
Betty Wright (843) 546-9714

Greenville County

Greenville
St. James Church
1st Friday 7:00 pm
Perkin's Restaurant
2nd Thursday 7:00 pm
Maria Atkinson (864) 884-7460

Greenville County – Greer

Greer/Greenville/Spartanburg
NAMI Greenville Office
2320 East North St Suite L
1st Thur 10-11am (parents of 12-up)
2nd Wed 10:30-11:30 (parents of 5-12)
For more info call (864)331-3300
Westminster Presbyterian Church
2nd Monday 6:15-7:30 teen group
6:15-7:30 parent group
Cindy Troyer (864)201-3598

Greenwood

Parents United
Greenwood Children's Center
113 Liner Dr.
Every Monday 5-6:30
Tara Cothran- 864-941-8196

Hampton County

Hampton
Call for time and place
Mary Morris (803) 943-9191

Kershaw County

Camden/Lugoff/Elgin
Wateree Baptist Church
4th Sunday 3:00-4:30 pm
Karen Sullivan (803-475-2545)
Work – (800) 203-8884 #9970

Lancaster County

Lynnwood United Methodist Church
3rd Sunday 3:00pm
Bridgett Reeves (803) 273-9133

Lexington County

Lexington/West Columbia
Three Rivers Hospital – Hwy.378
(private dining room)
1st Tuesday 7:00 – 8:00 pm
Crystal Bivens (803) 794-9796

Richland County

Columbia
Continuum of Care- 3rd Friday 6-7:30
Pheobe Malloy (803) 695-5700 (W)
(803) 776-4105 (H) or,
Lillie Griffin- (803) 731-7643 (H)

Richland County

Richland/Irmo
Union United Methodist Church
6:30-7:30 pm
2nd and 4th Wed of each month
Laurie Jackson (803) 407-8141

Spartanburg County

Spartanburg/Greer
Spartanburg County Library
3rd Friday 6:30 pm)
Maria Atkinson (864) 884-7460

Sumter County

Sumter-Phone support
Maureen Fitzgerald (803) 469-9729

Williamsburg County

Hemingway/Andrews/Kingstree
Call for date, time, and place
Glander Pressley (843) 382-8685

York County

Rock Hill
Call for time and place Danice Vance
(803) 324-5964
Betsy O'Brien (803) 802-4484



Can you spare Five Dollars (\$5) ?

If only half of those reading this newsletter would send a \$5 donation it would cover expenses to provide this quarterly newsletter to our current mailing list for one year.

Many have told us that they prefer to continue receiving this newsletter by mail, many more who read it do not have easy access to a computer. In order to continue to provide this service we must identify funds to print and mail this information. We are now able to provide access to this newsletter online at our new website <http://www.fedfamsc.org> If you would prefer to access the newsletter in this manner please e-mail us at info@fedfamsc.org and provide the address where this newsletter is mailed to you so that you may be removed from the mailing list.

If you can spare \$5 (or more) please send a tax deductible donation so that others may benefit from this information.

**Federation of Families of South Carolina
PO BOX 1266
Columbia, South Carolina 29202**

Name: _____

Telephone: () _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

___ \$5 ___ \$10 ___ \$25 _____ Other

All donations are tax deductible and graciously accepted.

FEDERATION OF FAMILIES OF SC
PO BOX 1266
COLUMBIA SC 29202

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
COLUMBIA, SC
PERMIT NO. 651