

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The current topic of your teen's health class is mental and emotional problems. As you may be aware, children and teens do experience depression and other emotional disorders. Approximately one in five children and adolescents experience the signs and symptoms of an emotional disorder during the course of a year. Your son or daughter will learn about types of mental disorders, their symptoms, and treatments. Your teen will also learn some of the signs that indicate when a person is experiencing trouble coping with mental or emotional problems. Your teen will describe available mental health services and the value of seeking appropriate mental health care. Attention will be given to identifying the warning signs of suicide and analyzing preventative strategies. Your teen will also examine the ways in which people cope with death, disasters, crises, and emotional loss.

Some of the questions your teen will explore as we study this chapter include: *What is a mental disorder? What are the most common types of mental disorders? Who suffers from them? What are some warning signs? Why do they require medical attention? What mental health services are available? What are the early detection signs of suicide? How can suicide be prevented? How do people cope with emotional loss? What services do counselors and other mental health professionals provide?*

Your involvement and participation in your teen's health education is important. To extend our classroom work, please complete one or more of the following activities with your teen:

- Ask your son or daughter to define *mental disorder*. Ask him or her to share the names and symptoms of common mental disorders and to explain the difference between mental disorders and short-term feelings of depression, anxiety, and anger.
- Ask your teen to describe some of the warning signs that people exhibit when they are having trouble coping with emotional or mental problems.
- Ask your son or daughter to explain his or her strategies for dealing with high stress situations. Discuss professional mental health care alternatives should these strategies prove inadequate in dealing with particular situations.

Please plan other activities you think will help your son or daughter develop an informed and positive attitude toward mental health issues. Thank you for supporting our classroom work. Feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss your teen's health education.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher