

EFFECTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The most immediate person affected by sexual violence is the victim/survivor, but the effects of sexual violence also go far beyond individual survivors, impacting their closest relationships as well as impacting communities and our society at large.

Impact on the survivor

Each survivor reacts to sexual violence in their own unique way. Personal style, culture, and context of the survivor's life may affect these reactions. Some express their emotions while others prefer to keep their feelings inside. Some may tell others right away what happened, others will wait weeks, months, or even years before discussing the assault, if they ever choose to do so. It is important to respect each person's choices and style of coping with this traumatic event. Whether an assault was completed or attempted, and regardless of whether it happened recently or many years ago, it may impact daily functioning. A wide range of reactions can impact victims. Some common emotional, psychological and physical reactions follow.

Emotional Reactions

- Guilt, shame, self-blame
- Embarrassment
- Fear, distrust
- Sadness
- Vulnerability
- Isolation
- Anger
- Numbness
- Confusion
- Shock, disbelief
- Denial

Psychological reactions

- Nightmares
- Flashbacks
- Depression
- Difficulty concentrating
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Anxiety
- Eating disorders
- Substance use or abuse
- Phobias
- Low self esteem

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THIS FALL, ALL NEW YORK STUDENTS WILL BE LEARNING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Elementary, middle and high school students across the state of New York have a new topic on their educational agendas as they head back to class this fall: mental health.

On July 1, a new law took effect in New York, which adds a paragraph to the state's Education Law mandating mental health as part of health education in schools. New York is the first state in the U.S. to require mental health to be taught as part of health education. Mental health experts say it's a big deal.

The stigma associated with mental illness and treatment for mental illness still exists, and is still a significant barrier standing in the way of more people seeking treatment for problems they face, Meredith Coles, PhD, professor of psychology at Binghamton University of the State University of New York, told NBC News BETTER. "It's time to recognize that mental illnesses are real and treatable."

Estimates from the National Institutes of Mental Health show that among U.S. adults 19.1 percent have had an anxiety disorder within the past year; 31.1 percent will experience an anxiety disorder at some point in their lives; and 6.7 percent are estimated to have had at least one major depressive episode.

The numbers among children are similarly if not more jarring. Data published in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry from a nationally representative sample of 10,123 adolescents ages 13 to 18 found that 22.2 percent had a serious mental illness.

Other data estimate 50 percent of mental illness begins by age 14, and 75 percent begins by age 24.

And people aren't getting help: The 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health showed that more than 11 million Americans do not receive needed mental health services.

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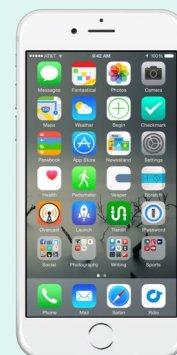


APP OF THE MONTH: Stigma

Stigma provides you a safe way to build your support network, journal what's on your mind, and keep track of your mood. **BUILD YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK:** PenPals - Find and message supportive peers; Support Groups - Join a caring group that matches your interests; Community - Share journals and offer & receive support. **REFLECT ON YOUR DAY:** Simple Journaling - Take 15 seconds to add a journal entry; Mood Calendar - Track your mood in a visual calendar. **TRACK YOUR PROGRESS:** Mood Graph - See how your mood adjusts over time; Word Cloud - Notice the prominent words you use in journals. **SEE WHAT IMPACTS YOUR MOOD:** Advanced Mood Analytics - Learn how exercise, location, and other factors impact your mood.

iPhone: <https://apple.co/2DJwprC>

Android: N/A



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"We need to change attitudes around mental health," says Coles, whose work focuses on anxiety disorders in both children and adults. "Starting to educate children in schools makes sense."

Decreasing stigma, changing attitudes and giving students practical knowledge they can use when it comes to mental health problems they or others face is why New York passed this legislation, New York's State Education Commissioner, MaryEllen Elia, tells NBC News BETTER.

"When young people learn about mental health and that it is an important aspect of overall health and well-being, the likelihood increases they will be able to effectively recognize signs and symptoms in themselves and others and will know where to turn for help — and it will decrease the stigma that attaches to help-seeking," she says in an email. "It is critical that we teach young people about mental health."

IT'S NOT ABOUT TEACHING PSYCH 101. STUDENTS WILL LEARN SKILLS THEY CAN USE.

The law gives the latitude to individual districts, schools and classrooms to decide, as long as they meet some broad parameters, how to design curricula and lesson plans that cover mental health (as is the case for all subjects — including alcohol, drug and tobacco abuse and the prevention and detection of certain cancers, the only two other topics included in the education law that are required to be taught as part of health education in the state of New York).

But New York schools aren't exactly being left on their own to figure out how to add mental health education to their teaching agendas.

After the changes to the law were passed in 2016, the New York State Education Department, along with the New York State Office of Mental Health and the Mental Health Association of New York State, Inc. (MHANYS), established the New York State Mental Health Education Advisory Council in August 2017 to provide guidance to schools on how to add mental health to the curricula.

By Sarah DiGiulio - To read the article in it's entirety visit nbcnews.com



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Effects of Sexual Violence

Physical reactions

- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Increased startle response
- Concerns about physical safety
- Physical injury
- Concerns about pregnancy or contracting an STI or HIV

Some health outcomes can be fatal such as suicide, homicide, maternal mortality and AIDS related deaths.

Impact on loved ones

When someone is a victim of sexual violence, it affects not only the survivor, but also all of the people around them. Sexual violence can affect many people in a victim/survivor's life: parents, friends, partners, children, spouses, classmates and/or co-workers. Part of what makes it so difficult for loved ones is not knowing what to say or do, but there are ways to offer constructive help as well as for you to get support.

Let them know that you believe them

All too often, disclosure is met by skepticism or outright disbelief. Simply letting a survivor know that you believe them and that you stand behind them is meaningful. Remember that although you may be having a strong reaction to what happened, it's important to focus on the feelings and reactions of the survivor rather than your own.

Allow the survivor to make his or her own decisions

This point can be very difficult, it can be very tempting to "take over" for a while in an attempt to help the survivor deal with the rape. It is important to remember that because of the rape, the survivor felt a loss of control over their life. Reestablishing that control is very important. Try to defer to a survivor's decisions, even if they decide to let you make some decisions. Then at least that was their choice and not yours. If a survivor wants to talk, try to be an open listener. If they prefer not to talk about the assault, then try to be supportive in other ways, letting them know that you care about him/her and are willing to listen at a later time if so desired.

Educate yourself about the myths of rape

A great deal of harm is done, often unintentionally, to survivors because the people around them believe the myths that surround rape. Rape is never the fault of the survivor, but rather the fault of the rapist. Although this sounds like a simple, even obvious, fact, much of the misinformation that exists points to the victim as being responsible for the rape. Educating yourself allows you to provide informed, compassionate support. Learn more about the most common myths about sexual violence.

Be ready to listen

Being a willing listener, who acknowledges the feelings of a person, makes a significant positive impact. Sometimes it's very useful to simply be with a person and create a safe silence. Non-judgmental support helps survivors tremendously as they recover from this traumatic event. If the victim/survivor you care about or you are in need of support, the YWCA of Cortland Aid to Victims of Violence provides comprehensive services to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence. You can also call the 24-hour hotline at 1-800-336-9622.

To read the article in its entirety visit <https://www.ourresilience.org>



OCTOBER IS INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL MONTH

Celebrate by participating in Walk to School Day on October 10, 2018. Walking and bicycling to school enables children to incorporate the regular physical activity they need each day while also forming healthy habits that can last a lifetime. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that children and adolescents get one hour or more of physical activity each day. Research suggests that physically active kids are more likely to become healthy, physically active adults, which also helps to improve mental and emotional health and stability. A sense of community and neighborhood attachment has also been demonstrated to have significant impact on

emotional well-being, especially for children. Walking or biking to school can build that sense of community as children and parents develop walking and bicycling buddies and chat with neighbors on the sidewalk or path. Give it a try!



BOOK SHARE PROGRAM CONTINUES

The Mental Health Association of Cortland County offers a book share program, developed for Mental Health related readings only. (Fiction or non-fiction.) It's *free* - your client gets to *keep* the book, and therapists can send multiple requests for books for multiple clients! Please note, there is a cap on funding so be mindful of your requests. For more information or to make a request, email us at: mhacortlandny@gmail.com



DEMENTIA CONVERSATIONS

TUESDAY 10/16/18 FROM 2:30-3:30PM

RM. 302, 60 Central Ave., Cortland

When someone is showing signs of dementia, it's time to talk. Often, conversations with family about changing behaviors can be challenging and uncomfortable. This program provides tips for breaking the ice with your family so you can address some of the most common issues that are difficult to discuss: going to the doctor for a diagnosis or medical treatment, deciding when to stop driving, and making legal and financial plans for future care. Please join the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging's Caregiver Resource Center for this free session. Call (607) 753-5060 to register or for more information.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND SUPPORT

Food for Thought

Wednesday, October 10th, 12:00—1:00pm

Cortland Elks, 9 Groton Ave., Cortland

Goddard, Certified Trainer on Resilient Children teach the "Flip It" strategy and will speak on social / emotional development and how their correlation impacts challenging behaviors.

Please Preregister at:

FoodforThoughtRSVP@gmail.com

607 Healing Hearts

Monday, October 15th, 6:00 - 8:00pm

*****165 Main St., Cortland**

Grief support group for parents/guardians who have experienced the death of an adult child.

For more info: 607healinghearts@gmail.com

Cortland LGBT Men's Group (Monthly)

Cortland LGBT Resource Center, 73 Main St.

For more information: (607) 756-8970

Parents & Change Support Group

October 15 November 19 December 17

6:00 to 7:30 PM

Community Center, 90 Central Ave. Cortland

Contact: Beckey Tripp (parentsandchange@yahoo.com)

Caregivers Support Group

Thursday, October 25, 3:00—4:00pm

Conf. Rm. B, Basement of CRMC, 134 Homer Ave., Cortland

For those who provide support for someone aged 60 or older.

For more info: Caregivers Resource Center (607) 753-5060.

If you have an upcoming community event or article you would like considered for inclusion in the MHA Newsletter, send your submission to susan@sevenvalleyshealth.org by the 14th of the month prior, or subscribe to the newsletter via email.

Disclaimer: The information presented here does not constitute professional medical advice. Individuals respond to treatment for mental health conditions in different ways, and treatment plans often need adjustment over time. Patients should work closely with their doctor and other health professionals in order to achieve optimal control of symptoms.