



Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital

Parent & Family Newsletter

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Who We Are:

Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital provides a safe, supportive, and therapeutic environment for children and adolescents who are dealing with stress, anxiety, and depression. Our programs can help your child learn and practice healthy behaviors. Therapeutic interventions focus on improving coping skills through behavior recognition and verbal processing, with an emphasis on improving interpersonal communication and understanding how behaviors impact others. We believe in treating the whole person – psychologically, emotionally, physically and spiritually. Our unique programs are designed to provide the most intensive level of treatment in a least restrictive environment.

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What Parents Want to Know:

Is Bullying on the Rise?

Cliff Saper, PhD – Executive Director, Intensive Outpatient Services



Bullying is clearly a problem that reaches into our culture, community, schools, peer groups and families. It is not a *new* problem, and we don't have adequate data to suggest it is more prevalent or more severe in recent years. However, the media has become recently

engaged with the topic because a young Massachusetts student committed suicide as a result of being bullied. Here are a few facts and tips about bullying that we have recently learned from research:

- There is a link between mental health issues and bullying. Perpetrators, Victims, and By-standers often evidence depression, hostility, and anxiety.
- Bullies and By-standers may be more likely to take drugs and drink alcohol than other teens
- Any bullying awareness program should include training students to become "Up-standers" rather than By-standers.
- Adults who were bullied as children are more likely to suffer from mental health issues as well as health issues including fatigue, pain, chronic unmanaged stress, and even nausea, sore throats, and a susceptibility to colds, than a similar control group (Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 2010).
- It is not true that bullies are unpopular or must have low-self esteem.

More information on the next page.....

Parenting Teens

Steve Hunter, LCSW, LMFT – Clinical Liaison

The challenge of parenting an adolescent requires a significant change in thinking as well as an ability to make sense of your teen's inconsistent behavior. The goals of adolescence are to anchor an identity, to build relationships, and to move from dependence to independence. This is manifested by a "push-pull" pattern, erratic mood, self-centeredness, an increased level of activity, and the onset of fads (which implies "superiority" over adults). These changes may seem to happen overnight and parents may long for the days when their child wanted to spend time with them.



"When did my kid become so moody?"

Continued on the next page...



ALEXIAN BROTHERS

HOSPITAL NETWORK

A Healthy Community Begins with Alexian Brothers.

www.abbhh.org

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Is Bullying on the Rise?

(Continued)

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- When your child confides in you about being bullied, listen - don't minimize, rationalize, or explain away the experience; but rather "empower" your child.
- When your child says he/she "hates" school, get more specifics and details about what he/she dislikes.
- Since your child will probably first tell a peer about being bullied, know your child's friends and be able to talk to them.
- When you suspect your child is not safe, privacy is not as important. Know what your child is doing on the web, on his/her cell phone, and in his/her writings and drawings.
- Make sure your behavior at home consists of open, non-judgmental communication, empathic understanding, and non-violent/ threatening actions. Your child is watching you.
- Be consistent and firm in setting limits in a non-punitive, non-physical way
- Make sure your school has a "zero-tolerance" action oriented intervention program for bullying that includes the training of "Up-standers"

Further resources:

- www.APA.org
- www.abbhh.org
- The Miller Youth Exhibit at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center (www.ihmec.org)

Parenting Teens (continued from first page). Parents may notice a variety of behaviors that seemingly make no sense. Examples of what certain behaviors mean are:

- Defiance = leave me alone
- Devious = direct confrontation is too unpleasant
- Irritable = I resent the interference
- Secretive = fear of ridicule and shame
- Boastful = insecurity
- Depressed = nothing seems to work out
- Rebellious = my parents have rules that interfere with my "rocky" life

Parenting adolescents requires that adults must be willing to change their approach to one of being a "consultant", while creating steadfast rules (3 – 4) for safety and to serve as guideposts. Parents may want to be a bit more flexible and adjust rules as teens prove they can handle more responsibility.

Communication requires that parents make every effort to be approachable. This may involve making fewer statements and asking more questions, i.e.: how do you think you might handle that situation? Rather than telling them. Be prepared to encourage movement toward better choices. Remember that you praised them for learning to ride a two-wheel bike when they were younger and now they are faced with new "bikes" such as relationships, self-esteem, and problem solving. Be careful not to chastise them as they learn to ride their new "bikes".

Finally, be prepared to make a few concessions, pick your battles (90% don't matter) and be certain that the first word out of your mouth isn't a criticism. Even when you have exhausted all "consequences" and when all else fails, go back to developing a relationship.

Alexian Brothers recently announced the opening of our new **Autism Spectrum and Developmental Disorders Resource Center** in Hoffman Estates. This service can assist families through a confusing and often frustrating process of finding appropriate resources for their loved one. Our expert Clinical Navigator, **Brianne Lukowski, Psy.D** works with individuals and families to help assess their needs, and facilitate access to vital services. For more information, call **847-755-8536**

Quick Reference Guide to Youth Services at ABBHH

	Inpatient		Partial Hospitalization Intensive Outpatient		Outpatient	
	Child (ages 7-11)	Adolescent (ages 11-18)	Child (ages 7-11)	Adolescent (ages 11-18)	Child (ages 7-11)	Adolescent (ages 11-18)
<i>Mental Health</i>		X	X	X	X	X
<i>Addictions</i>				X		X
<i>Eating Disorders</i>		X	X	X	X	X
<i>Self-Injury</i>		X	X	X	X	X
<i>Anxiety & OCD</i>		X	X	X	X	X
<i>School Refusal</i>			X	X	X	X
<i>Family Options Program</i>					X	X

For more information check out www.abbhh.org or call 800-432-5005.