

“Who’s On Your Team?”

By: Alisha Parker-Cummins

“Team Work makes the Dreams Work” a popular saying some of you may have recognized throughout the years. Its reference has been related to people working together to achieve more than they could individually and or independently. One could say that could not be a truer statement in terms of today’s prevalence in childhood mental health disorders. You’re not alone. A team approach — with families, healthcare professionals, mental health providers, educators, and social-emotional support sources all working together — we can change lives and outcomes during these formative years in our children’s lives.

In today’s society we have come a long way in recognizing the burdens caused by childhood mental health conditions. With iconic celebrities sharing their own personal struggles with mental health disorders, to the rise in advocacy, mental health awareness is on the upswing. None the less, far too many children and teens fail to get the help they need due to the ongoing stigma and barriers in accessing mental health treatment. According to the CDC (Center for Disease Control) mental disorders among children are described as serious changes in the way children typically learn, behave, or handle their emotions, which cause distress and problems getting through the day. ADHD, behavioral problems, anxiety, and depression are the most commonly diagnosed mental disorders in children.

What do we do?

According to the CDC

Parents- You know your child best. Talk to your child’s healthcare professional if you have concerns about the way your child behaves at home, in school, or with friends.

Healthcare professionals- Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment based on updated guidelines are very important. There are mental health resources available to help diagnose and treat children’s mental disorders.

Teachers/ School administrators- Early identification is important so that children can get the help they need. Work with families and healthcare professionals if you have concerns about the mental health of a child in your school.

Angela Essary, MS, LPC, Adult Program Manager and previous Child Program Manager with Psycamore, LLC suggest some simple things parents can work on for any child regardless of health.

- A regular sleep/wake cycle helps in regulation of Serotonin, stress hormones like Cortisol, and the ability to pay attention and manage moods.
- Regulating screen time is important- too much creates symptoms that mimic depression, anxiety, and ADHD, so much so that Screen Syndrome is being considered for addition to the next Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.
- Limits are good for children. Whether that be screen time or bedtime or general discipline. Kids need to know what parameters they have to operate within. It offers a sense of security. In the Psycamore child program, we use the 1-2-3 magic: Effective Discipline for Children ages 2-12(and in the adolescent program we use the teen version).
- Mindfulness activities that help us be completely in the moment (paying attention, on purpose) like yoga, are incredibly good for the brain, particularly the frontal lobe. This means mindfulness practices are very good for depression, anxiety, ADHD, and anger problems.
- Healthy Environment. Kids absorb a lot of energy from their environment. That means the health and well-being of the parent is critical. Chances are, if it's a healthy behavior for the kid (nutrition, regular sleep, limited screen time, mindfulness activities) it's good for the parent too. Not only will this help a parent de-stress, it will model healthy behavior for the child.

Mental health is not a condition in which only affecting adults. Untreated, these disorders could have dire consequences. Let's fight the stigma and let's get our children, teens, and even ourselves the help we need and deserve. For more information feel free to reach out to us for help. Psycamore, LLC has three locations throughout Mississippi. Our Flowood location treats children, adolescents, and adults. Our Southaven and Biloxi locations treat adolescents and adults.