

DCMHS Kids Line:

Child Mental Health and Juvenile Justice



Summer/Fall 2007

Ruth Ann Minner, Governor	A Newsletter from the Division of Child Mental Health Services Department of Service for Children, Youth and Their Families State of Delaware	Cari DeSantis, Cabinet Secretary
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Perry Phelps
DYRS Director

News for Parents and Caregivers of Youth in Delaware's Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services (DYRS)



Susan Cycyk,
DCMHS Director

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS:

Did you know that one-half to two-thirds of youth in the juvenile justice system in the U.S. have one or more disabilities? These can include emotional and behavior problems and drug or alcohol problems. Some youth are arrested for behaviors caused by emotional or behavioral problems that have not been identified.

When identified, most child mental health problems can be effectively treated. Without treatment, behavioral and emotional problems can get worse, leading to school failure or problems at home, in school or in the community.

We want parents and caregivers to know that we care about your child's emotional and behavioral problems and drug or alcohol problems. When youth enter any DYRS residential program in Delaware, they receive a physical examination and are screened for emotional, behavioral problems and alcohol or drug problems. When youth have problems, our staff will work with them to get the right services to help them.

Parents and caregivers can play an important role, supporting positive change for youth. You can provide important information about your child, participate in planning services for them, participate in counseling and, after the youth comes home, help provide support to make sure services continue.

Services in the community can provide the most effective help. We look forward to being a partner with you and your child to help with emotional and behavioral problems in our facilities and also in the community after release from our residential programs.

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Perry Phelps

Susan Cycyk

Child Mental Health Services in Delaware's Juvenile Justice Programs

ALL State juvenile justice residential programs have counselors to help youth with emotional or behavior problems and drug or alcohol abuse issues.

Pictures and contact information for counselors are provided on the next page to help you know who to call when you have questions or need more information about your child's emotional or behavioral problems and the help they are getting from the counselors. Counselors work with DYRS program staff to make sure that if your child is upset or feeling blue, your child will not hurt himself.

You may be asked to help by providing information to the counselors or by coming to counseling with your child.

The counseling services in these programs include:

- Learning about emotional or behavioral problems
- Learning about drug or alcohol problems
- Counseling your child (in group or one-on-one settings) to help with problems in the child's life
- Working with the doctor when medicine is part of the treatment plan, to make sure the medicine is working as it should to help the child get better
- Responding if there is an emotional crisis
- Planning for community counseling services after release

How to Access Delaware's Public Child Mental Health Services

DCMHS' public children's behavioral healthcare system is committed to:

- Accessible service
- Appropriate treatment
- Treatment in the *most normal setting in the community, where your child can go to school or get a job.*

DCMHS serves children through age 17 with Medicaid or without insurance.

To access counseling for your child's emotional or behavioral problems or for problems with drug or alcohol:

Call one of the counseling agencies listed on page 4 of this newsletter. You should expect to get an appointment with a counselor in about 7—10 working days. It may take longer if there is only a certain time you and the child can meet with a counselor.

NO pre-authorization is necessary.

Counselors in Delaware's DYRS Programs

DETENTION CENTERS

DETENTION CENTERS provide a safe, secure, short-term setting for youth who are awaiting trial or sentencing. The New Castle County Detention Center provides services in north Delaware while the Stevenson House provides services for south Delaware.

**New Castle
County
Detention
Center**
North
Delaware
633-3100



Barbara
Caffrey,
Psy.D.,
Psychologist



Anne Marie Marquis,
Ph.D.,
Psychologist



Lisa Ritchie, M.S., N.C.C.
Substance Abuse Specialist

**Stevenson
House**
South
Delaware
424-8100



Earl Walker,
Ph.D.
Psychologist



Jennifer Showers,
CADC
Substance Abuse
Specialist

GRACE AND SNOWDEN COTTAGE PROGRAMS

GRACE COTTAGE for girls **AND SNOWDEN COTTAGE** for boys are staff-secure, Level 4 programs that provide education, treatment and life skills in a safe, secure environment to adjudicated youth to help prepare them for successful re-entry into the community.



Rosemary Szczechowski, Ph.D. (Dr. Rosemary)
Psychologist

Grace Cottage: **633-2530** Snowden Cottage **892-6465**

FERRIS SCHOOL

Ferris School for Boys is a Level 5 secure care facility for up to 80 adjudicated delinquent boys who are committed by Family or Superior Court. **MOWLDS COTTAGE** is a six-week transition program for youth leaving Ferris, with home passes and aftercare planning.



Patrick McGuffin,
Ph.D.
Psychologist
993-3810



Jacqueline
McMichael, Ph.D.
Psychologist
993-3810

DYRS Community Services—Probation and Parole

Youth who commit a crime may be sent by a judge to “Community Services.” The youth will live at home, but report to a probation officer who will check on them to make sure they are complying with the terms of their sentence.

Often, youth on probation have emotional or behavioral problems or problems with drugs or alcohol. Counselors can help youth with these problems. If you would like for your child to get help from a counselor, you can contact any of the agencies below.

If you are not sure what to do, or want help getting help for your child, please call the Division of Child Mental Health Services’

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE
at (302) 633-2571
OR 1-800-722-7710 (TOLL FREE)

DCMHS Community Counseling Providers:

NEW CASTLE COUNTY: (302 area code)

Aquila (SA & MH)	999-1106	Delaware Guidance (MH)	652-3948
Catholic Charities (MH & SA)	655-9624	Jewish Family Services/DE (MH)	478-9411
Children & Families First (MH)	1-800-734- 2388	Open Door (MH & SA)	731-1504
Crossroads (SA)	652-1405	Phoenix (MH & SA)	736-6135
		SODAT (SA)	656-4044

KENT COUNTY: (302 area code)

Aquila (SA)	376-8610	Delaware Guidance (MH)	678-3020
Catholic Charities (MH)	674-1600	Open Door (SA)	678-4911
Children & Families First (MH)	1-800-734- 2388	People’s Place (MH/SA)	422-8026
		Phoenix (MH & SA)	736-6135

SUSSEX COUNTY: (302 area code)

Aquila (SA)	856-9746	Delaware Guidance (MH)	645-5338
Catholic Charities (MH)	856-9578	People’s Place (MH & SA)	422-8026
Children & Families First (MH)	1-800-734-2388	Phoenix (MH & SA)	736-6135

MH = Mental Health

SA = Substance Abuse (Drugs or Alcohol)



Children with good mental health are less likely to experience school failure, family conflicts, substance abuse and suicide.

Like adults, children and adolescents can have mental health problems that interfere with the way they think, feel and act.



Caregiver supervision and involvement with a child or adolescent in treatment greatly increases the likelihood of success in reducing problem behaviors and increasing positive behavior.

Involvement can include:

- Relationship with a mentoring adult
- Close supervision
- Clear limit setting and
- Keeping away from friends who are not a good influence

The Causes of Mental Health Problems are Complicated

Mental health problems in children and teens are caused mostly by biology and environment. Examples of biological causes are genetics, chemical imbalances in the body, or damage to the central nervous system, such as a head injury. Many environmental factors also put young people at risk for developing mental health disorders. Examples include:

- Exposure to poisons, such as high levels of lead;
- Exposure to violence, such as witnessing or being the victim of physical or sexual abuse, assaults, shootings or muggings;
- Stress related to poverty, discrimination, or other serious hardships; and
- The loss of important people through death, divorce, or broken relationships.

New Child Traumatic Stress Treatment

DCMHS is creating a trauma-informed system of care for Delaware's children and families, with the help of a \$1.6 million, four year Delaware Child Traumatic Stress Treatment Center federal grant.

More than one in four children in America have a serious traumatic event by age 16. For youth in juvenile justice, that rate is much higher. Many children have problems in school, at home or with friends because they are traumatized by violence, physical or sexual abuse.

- Child trauma is common
- Child traumatic stress can be identified
- Child traumatic stress is serious
- Caring adults can help
- Child traumatic stress is treatable

DCMHS has a statewide pilot program, available through Phoenix Behavioral Health, that provides Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for youth aged 4—17 years.

For more information about trauma-specific treatment in Delaware, contact Chuck Webb, Ph.D. at 302-633-2598.

Signs of Mental Health Disorders Can Signal a Need for Help



Children and teens with emotional or behavior problems or problems with drugs and/or alcohol need to get help as soon as possible.

Parents and caregivers should pay attention to the warning signs below and get counseling for your child if you see the signs.

Early identification of child mental health problems, effective treatment and caregiver involvement in treatment can help the child improve in functioning and decrease behavior problems.

A child or adolescent is troubled by feeling:

- Sad and hopeless for no reason, and these feelings do not go away.
- Very angry most of the time and crying a lot or overreacting to things.
- Worthless or guilty often.
- Anxious or worried often.
- Unable to get over a loss or death of someone important.
- Extremely fearful or having unexplained fears.
- Constantly concerned about physical problems or physical appearance.
- Frightened that his or her mind either is controlled or is out of control.

A child or adolescent experiences:

- Poor concentration and is unable to think straight or make up his or her mind.
- An inability to sit still or focus attention.
- Worry about being harmed, hurting others, or doing something "bad."
- A need to wash, clean things, or perform certain routines hundreds of times a day, in order to avoid an unsubstantiated danger.
- Racing thoughts that are almost too fast to follow.
- Persistent nightmares.

A child or adolescent experiences big changes, such as:

- Showing declining performance in school.
- Losing interest in things once enjoyed.
- Experiencing unexplained changes in sleeping or eating patterns.
- Avoiding friends or family and wanting to be alone all the time.
- Daydreaming too much and not completing tasks.
- Feeling life is too hard to handle.
- Hearing voices that cannot be explained.
- Talks about harm to self or others.

A child or adolescent behaves in ways that cause problems, such as:

- Using alcohol or other drugs.
- Eating large amounts of food and then purging, or abusing laxatives to avoid weight gain.
- Dieting and/or exercising obsessively.
- Violating the rights of others or constantly breaking the law without regard for other people.
- Setting fires.
- Doing things that can be life threatening.
- Killing animals.

Youth in DYRS Programs Take Part in “May is Mental Health Month” Events

In May 2007, more than 240 youth were involved in a month-long series of events during “May is Mental Health Month.” Goals were to increase awareness about child mental health and effective treatment and to engage youth in talking about mental health and substance issues and ways to get help.

With the help of DCMHS staff, each of the DYRS facilities recognized **May as Mental Health Month** in their own unique way. At **Stevenson House**, staff developed and presented to youth a weekly education and information program on children’s mental health, including anxiety and stress, substance use, relationship building and communication. Youth were invited to participate in a poster contest, with a May 31st Creative Arts Award Ceremony. At the **NCC Detention Center**, youth went to presentations on children’s mental health and participated in a poster contest. Superintendent Steven Wesley and Deputy Superintendent Garrison provided **awards** for the contest winners, including extra calls to home or a special dinner.



Psychologists and program staff developed a series of activities for youth to increase awareness about children’s mental health and reduce stigma for youth at **Ferris, Mowlds, Grace and Snowden**. Youth designed and created posters that were displayed and judged by a panel of volunteers. **All youth who created posters were recognized in a special event**, with lots of **Rita’s Water Ice** provided by a local Rita’s Water Ice store. In addition, youth at Grace and Snowden heard a presentation called “Beyond Stress Teen,” by Barbara Hill of the **Mental Health Association**.

Learning more about mental health is an important part of growing up!





Delaware Children's Department

37-03-101 N300
Delaware Youth and Family Center
1825 Faulkland Road
Wilmington, DE 19805

Phone: 302-633-2600
Fax: 302-633-5118
Email:
nancy.widdoes@state.de.us

**THINK OF THE CHILD
FIRST!!!**



OR
www.thinkofthechildfirst.com

New Castle County North Region Probation:

Elwyn 577-6011
RoseHill 577-7832
Courthouse 255-0496
Claymont 788-4719

New Castle County South Probation:

Barley Mill 995-8230

South Delaware Probation:

Dover 739-5381
Milford 422-1556
Georgetown 856-5664

Trauma Informed Service in Juvenile Justice in Delaware

Aileen Fink, Ph.D. is the supervising psychologist for all child mental health services in Delaware's juvenile justice facilities.



Pictured with Dr. Fink at left is Damion Grasso who is a doctoral student at the University of Delaware who works with the DCMHS' federal Child Traumatic Stress Treatment Center Grant, mostly in evaluation.

Mr. Grasso provides screening for youth at Grace and Snowden Cottages to help link youth and their families to treatment after release. He provides individual and group counseling to help youth at Ferris School and Snowden Cottage to help them better understand the connection between feelings and behavior and improve their ability to manage stress.

DCMHS' Child Priority Response Teams

When a child is in a emotional crisis and could cause self harm or harm someone else or has been exposed to a recent traumatic or violent event.

CALL:
New Castle County
302-633-5128
(North of C&D Canal)

**NCC (South of C&D Canal) and
Kent County &
Sussex County**
302-424-HELP (4357)

OR CALL TOLL FREE:
1-800-722-7710