

IDAHO FEDERATION OF  
*Families*  
FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH



3173 N. Cole Rd.  
Boise, ID  
83704  
www.idahofederation.org  
208-433-8845  
1-800-905-3436

Address Correction Requested



## Art From Idaho's Heart

This summer a workshop called "Art from the Heart" was offered in every region of Idaho. The workshop was for youth with and without mental health disorders. The teachers discussed the importance of staying mentally healthy. One strategy is expressing yourself through different mediums. "The art was fantastic but seeing kids free to draw out their emotions was the larger masterpiece," said Kathryn Gillenwater, the project's designer and coordinator. "Special thanks to everyone who created and helped!"

Each youth was offered the chance to submit his or her artwork for a traveling art display. Pieces have been selected and reprinted, creating a gallery of visual images representing what it's like to see the world "Through Our Eyes." The pictures provoke new insight about the outlook of youth with mental health disorders. The kick-off event is January 9, 2006, in the Idaho State Capitol Building starting at 10am. The display will continue at the Capitol through the 20th before traveling to each Idaho region. Call 211 or 1-800-926-2588 for details.



What comes to your mind when you hear the term mental health? For some it is a negative term. But if you have a mind, you are dealing with mental health. Mental health is how we think, feel, and act in order to face life's situations. It is

how we look at ourselves, our lives, and the people we know and care about. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, evaluate our options, and make choices. Like physical health, mental health is important at every stage of life. Everyone has mental health.

Like physical health, our mental health can experience problems. When challenges occur in our body, symptoms will occur: high fever, sore throat. As part of the body, the brain experiences challenges and will emit symptoms: crying, sadness, worry. Professionals have studied and documented the symptoms of common disorders. SAMHSA explains that some of these problems are depression, anxiety, conduct, eating, and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorders just to name a few. Disorders can affect young and old minds.

It is estimated that mental health problems affect one in five young people. Tragically, approximately two thirds don't get the help they need. Others, whose symptoms are just considered lack of discipline, may go their whole lives without gaining the tools to better cope.

That doesn't mean it's easy. Mental health problems can disrupt daily life at home, at school or in your community. Serious emotional disturbances are mental health problems that potentially disrupt life. At the Idaho Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, we meet parents, teachers, legislators, police officers, brothers and sisters who care deeply about the life and health of a child. Sometimes it becomes difficult to know the best way to help a child with a serious emotional disturbance. Listed here are the ABC's of interacting with a child with a mental health disorder.

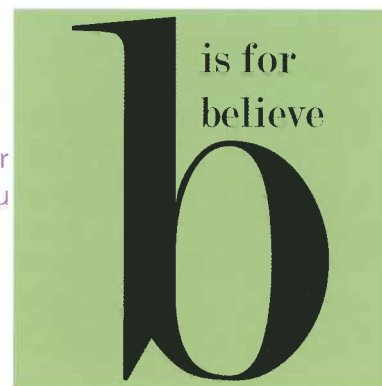
**A is for Ask.** By asking questions you can arm yourself with information from reliable sources. There are some things that can't be expressed on paper. Hearing another parent express his or her frustrations about schools or medications can be invaluable. When you listen to other parents speak, it can be an immense relief to know you aren't alone. Support groups offered through the Idaho Federation of Families meet regularly in every region of Idaho. By calling our office, you can find out when and where the next one is in your area. If you want to start small, you can talk to a Family Support Specialist, who are themselves parents of children with mental health disorders, or perhaps you know a friend or family member with whom you feel comfortable discussing the matter. Although it may be awkward in the beginning, once you find another parent facing the same challenges you are, your life will change forever. Just ask.

**B is for Believe.** Believe in your child, especially now. As scared and frustrated as you are, a child experiencing mental health problems may be more so.

At the children's mental health conference this year there were classes specifically for youth. One class hosted a mental health professional who answered questions posed by the youth: "Does being crazy mean you are stupid?" "What do I say to my girlfriend about my disorder?" One talented young man learned, "Oh, you mean I am Bobby, not ADHD." demonstrating they struggle through making sense of this too. Encourage youth to express his feelings; respect those feelings.

One way you can express your belief in your child is by getting to know his or her strengths and needs. Encourage your child's talents and accept limitations. Look for your child's goals and interests, not someone else's expectations. By taking time to celebrate accomplishments you foster belief that his/her world will be filled with precious moments of success. Do your best to provide a home where a child feels loved and encouraged. Seek help if you are overwhelmed by your child's behaviors. Take every opportunity to express your child's potential.

**Commit.** Part of this commitment comes easily; after all, it is your child or a youth you deeply care for. But that commitment will need to be demonstrated time and time again.





First, show commitment to your child. He or she may test the limits to see if your allegiance is truly unconditional and your youth may claim that difficult choices do not equal love or commitment. Each individual needs to see that you are there for them, through the good times and bad. Just knowing they are not alone will quiet fears.

Second, show those helping you and your child that you are committed to your child's progress. One mother felt her level of interest would be taken more seriously if she dressed like other providers at her daughter's IEP meeting. And it did. She reported that the response was very different as she confidently walked into the room with a suit jacket, skirt and high heels. This mother brought a brief case with her daughter's picture and name taped on the front. Her daughter's progress was her business. Other ways may include keeping detailed records of your child's treatments, medications, and responses. Being organized with your child's information will indicate to providers that you have a vested interest in your child's well being.

Last, join others who are committed. Unfortunately, you may run into those who are burned out. Work hard to keep yourself surrounded with people who share your love and concern for your child. You will find these people everywhere: neighbors, teachers, coaches, grandparents, and providers. Remember, if you ever lack support there is a whole family here at the Idaho Federation of Families ready to advocate for all kids.



## Resources on the Internet:

[www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

[www.chip.idaho.gov](http://www.chip.idaho.gov)

Children's Health Insurance Program

[www.gccfc.idaho.gov](http://www.gccfc.idaho.gov)

Governor's Coordinating Council For Children

[www.nicwa.org](http://www.nicwa.org)

National Indian Child Welfare Association

[www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)

Information on laws and policies

[www.mspcc.org](http://www.mspcc.org)

24-hour live moderated chat room

[www.mentalhealth.org](http://www.mentalhealth.org)

US Dept. of Health and Human Services

[www.idahosystemofcare.org](http://www.idahosystemofcare.org)

Idaho System of Care

<http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>

Drug, Alcohol, Abuse Treatment Facility Locator

## Just Ask

"Just Ask" was a panel discussion brought to you by the Idaho Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. The discussion gave community professionals the opportunity to present questions to a panel of parents and youth who have navigated the various systems.

"Just Ask" was developed to strengthen family voice and choice in the area of children's mental health. This was an open forum discussion allowing professionals to ask questions that increased understanding of the parent and youth experiences. Just Ask was presented in each region.

We want to say thank you to the youth and the parents who participated on this panel. The training wouldn't have been a success without you.

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For more information on  
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The man who moved a mountain was the one  
who began carrying away small stones.

-Chinese Proverb

The Mental Health Pharmacy Management Initiative (MHPMI) is a project sponsored by Idaho Medicaid to improve the quality of prescribing patterns based on best practice clinical guidelines for all drug classes used in the treatment of mental illness. Over the past few years Idaho Medicaid has become increasingly concerned about the growing inappropriate and unsafe use of these drugs combined with their high cost.

The MHPMI project uses educational interventions designed to assist our prescribers without restricting their ability to treat their clients. Early results have shown that this project is working.

Our dedicated prescribers are taking the time to use the information provided to them to improve the quality of care received by our mental health clients. But they cannot do it alone. They need your help.

In a recent meeting with the Idaho Federation of Families we identified some things parents could do to help assure quality care for their children.

- Be involved. Ask questions and make sure that you know what each drug is supposed to do and what risks are associated with that drug.
- Keep accurate records. Know what drugs your child has been on and how they responded to those treatments.
- Keep a current listing of the medications they are on readily available as a reference and in case of an emergency.
- Remember that with a valid prescription your child can always get a 72 hour emergency supply of the medication, even if it requires prior authorization (PA). This rule was put in place to make certain that medically necessary medication is available over the weekend and during the PA approval process.

If you have questions please contact our Medicaid Pharmacy call center at (208) 364-1829 or visit our website @ [www.medicaidpharmacy.idaho.gov](http://www.medicaidpharmacy.idaho.gov)

Together we can ensure that our children receive the right care, at the right time with the right price.  
Letter submitted by Tyler Owen

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**Annual Membership Form**

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Please accept my tax deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.  
Membership does not require fee

