



CHI Health

better you

I M A G I N E T H A T .

Vaping and Juuling:

A Trend on Fire

Releasing
Anxiety's Grip

Why Doesn't
Anyone Like Me?

Healthy Minds
2018/2019



Welcome to Better You Healthy Minds

Who among us would choose to relive those difficult teen years – particularly with today’s challenges? It’s hard being a teenager and sometimes just as complicated raising them.

BetterYou Healthy Minds is just one way CHI Health is helping families navigate what can often be a turbulent time.

Within these pages, CHI Health mental health experts will shed light on the struggles teens face today – and offer tips for families to get through life’s challenges together.

Topics in this issue include peer pressure, anxiety, parental expectations, depression, cutting, bullying, social media and more.

Please use this publication as a resource, and get in touch at CHIhealth.com/BetterYouSurvey to share topics you’d like to see covered in the next BetterYou Healthy Minds.



Helicopter No More: Be Present without Hovering

- Let children set their own goals and timelines. Ask: “What do you want to accomplish today/this week?” Guide them in an age-appropriate way.
- Ask open-ended questions. “What’s going on tonight with your homework?” not “Do you have homework?”
- Have conversations that aren’t face-to-face, such as in the car or while preparing dinner.
- Pause to hear what kids say. Sometimes small comments

signal a larger truth. “I’m tired of this” can mean more than routine weariness.

- Embrace disappointment as a character-building experience. “Sometimes we have to fall down gracefully and figure out how to get back up,” said Karen Williams, LIMHP, CHI Health mental health therapist.
- Give kids time to just be. “We are human beings, not human doings,” Williams said.



"Sometimes small comments signal a larger truth."

Pressure Doesn't Make Perfect: Beware Sky-High Expectations



Straight As, exceptional extracurriculars, bright futures. We want it all for our kids. “I do see high schoolers struggling with high parental expectations,” said Karen Williams, LIMHP, CHI Health psychotherapist. Showing interest in our children’s activities is extremely important. But

interest can become obsession when we try too hard as parents. “What we do want is for kids to live up to and into their potential – not our idea of perfection,” Williams said. “There’s no perfection for kids or for parents. We all make mistakes and we get to try again.”

5 Signs Parents Need to Step Back

- 1 You criticize more than you praise your child.
- 2 You micromanage your kid’s projects.
- 3 You feel like every activity will make or break your child’s future.
- 4 You’re making decisions your children should make.
- 5 You become frustrated easily and lose your temper.



Rude, Mean or Worse? Always Take the Kind Road

Our differences make us stronger, our world more vibrant. But it's also natural to gravitate toward those who share our same interests.

"I encourage teens to give themselves room to grow into their beliefs. Expand your view, challenge ideas, meet new people. Of course there will be things and people you prefer more than others," said Bridget Mostek, LIMHP, CHI Health psychotherapist.

"In every interaction, even when there's conflict, we can all choose to be tactful, polite and even respectful," she said. "Choosing kindness doesn't mean you're obligated to like a person. It's less about them and more about the type of person you choose to be."

Challenged by someone with differing views? Before you respond, ask herself, "How would I feel if these were the last words spoken to someone I love?" Mostek said. "We never know the inner battles other people face; represent yourself well and strive for kindness."

What's not OK is to respond by being rude, mean or worse—bullying.

What Bullying Really Looks Like

22% **28%**

Students age 12-18 bullied at school

Young people that experience cyberbullying sometime in their life

Many young people will experience bullying over the course of their lifetime. However, not every conflict is bullying. Sometimes it's just bad, unacceptable behavior. How to tell the difference:

Rudeness: Carelessly saying or doing something that hurts someone.

Meanness: Purposefully saying or doing something once, maybe twice, to hurt someone.

Bullying: Intentionally aggressive behavior, repeated over time, that involves an imbalance of power. Three components must be present:

1. Repeated actions or threats
2. A power imbalance
3. Intention to cause harm

Who Bullies Target Most

Bullies don't need a reason to treat someone badly. But according to a new study, weight is the predominant reason kids become targets. Parents can combat this trend – so pervasive it's been dubbed "fat shaming" – by helping teens develop a positive body image. Start by being a positive role model and avoiding negative talk about food, weight, body size and shape.

Vaping and Juuling: A Trend on Fire

Originally marketed as an alternative to cigarettes, vaping and e-cigarettes have caught fire with kids. In fact, e-cigarette use tripled in middle and high school students from 2013 to 2015.

Five fast facts:

1. "Vaping" is the act of puffing on an e-cigarette. E-cigarettes are also called e-hookahs, mods, vape pens and Juuls.
2. A Juul ("jewel") is an e-cigarette that's small – sometimes resembling a flash drive – and popular because kids can sneak puffs during class.
3. Almost all e-cigarette products contain nicotine, which is addictive and can disrupt brain development in young people. One Juul cartridge can have as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes.
4. E-liquids used in e-cigarettes have been marketed to resemble kid-friendly products like juice boxes, candy and cookies.
5. The Centers for Disease Control has stated that e-cigarettes can contain cancer-causing agents, heavy metals like lead and volatile organic compounds.



Under your influence Parents Play Vital Role in Kids' Alcohol, Drug Use



Have the talk. Children are 50 percent less likely to use alcohol or drugs if parents bring up the topic.

"It's very important to have those conversations before you start noticing problems or having concerns," said Scott Halverson, LIMHP, CHI Health psychotherapist. Talking tips:

- Find "teachable moments" while watching TV or discussing celebrities with drug/alcohol issues.
- Listen as much as you talk to find out what your children know.

- Notice and reinforce positive behavior more than negative.
- Discuss family history of alcohol or drug abuse – and how that increases their risk.
- Stay calm. Yelling, name-calling or shaming can turn the child against you.

"Teens are going to test you but keep the focus on the fact that your communication comes out of love, care, concern and a desire to understand your children," Halverson said.

Why Doesn't Anyone Like Me?



It's not easy making friends, especially during the tumultuous teen years when you're changing so much.

"High social anxiety, exposure to bullying, physical appearance, race, confusion about who you are, home environment and other issues can all affect the social dynamics of a teen," said CHI Health Psychotherapist John Duggins, LIMHP, LADC. "And that can lead to beliefs that 'I must not be good enough' or 'there must be something wrong with me.'"

How do you surround yourself with people who like you? "Participation. It sounds fairly simple but it's not very easy," Duggins said. "Get involved in clubs at school, after-school programs, sports or volunteering in the community. Wherever you have the opportunity to meet and engage with other teenagers."

Your Brain: What Were You Thinking?

Teen brains are still developing – that's why smart teens sometimes make bad decisions. The frontal lobes aren't fully connected and the teen brain doesn't have as much myelin – a coating that plays the role of electrical wire insulation – as an adult brain does.

Four Ways Parents Can Help in the Friend Department

1 Talk to a trusted teacher, coach or club leader about your teen's struggles and get their input.

2 Encourage your teen to hone conversational skills with you, grandparents or other loved ones.

3 Role play social situations with your child so he or she can practice responses.

4 Share how you sometimes struggle to make small talk, and how you handle awkward moments.

That's why seemingly normal teenagers, even excellent students, occasionally make questionable decisions. So when do parts of the brain finally communicate well with each other? Think mid-20s.



Break Free: Releasing Anxiety's Grip

Anxiety can feel like an invisible force that holds you back in life. "Learning to face it is an essential part of growing up," said Mindy Hinton, LIMHP, CHI Health psychotherapist. If your teen is struggling, take deep breaths together to ease the fight-or-flight process. It's important to acknowledge feelings as real and valid. It's not helpful for kids to feel they are failing in some way. Practicing mindfulness exercises

can ease nerves by helping kids stay present in the moment.

"Practicing mindfulness is incredibly empowering for children, and for ourselves," Hinton said. "It can help kids better manage stress and anxiety when it does occur. It helps with self-regulation, promotes positive emotions and helps grow self-compassion."

If anxiety persists or escalates into panic, seek professional help.

"Just One Breath"

Mindfulness Exercise

- Find a relaxing place, sit comfortably and set a timer for one minute.
- Breathe deeply in and out while paying attention to any sensations you notice or sounds you hear.
- Take a slow, deep breath. Imagine the air moving down into your lungs and back up as you exhale.
- Take one more deep breath and hold for a moment, then release it.



When Those Facebook Friends Aren't Your Friends After All

Social media gives teens an "instant connection with a large number of people that can quickly provide a feeling of acceptance," said CHI Health Psychotherapist Mike Grove, LIMHP.

But incomplete brain development also means adolescents "are naturally more likely to be impulsive and engage in problem behaviors."

Instead of losing hours in the

digital world, Grove suggested teens cut back and have more "in-person social interactions" through organized school, church and club activities, as well as part-time jobs.

Cutting: An Explainer



Contrary to popular belief, the act of self-harm known as cutting isn't necessarily a prelude to a suicide attempt. However, it should be taken seriously.

"Typically children are using it as a coping mechanism for emotional pain. It provides a sense of control," said Christi Cloyd, LIMHP, LADC, a CHI Health psychotherapist and chemical dependence counselor.

Cutting can also be addictive because it releases endorphins – similar to a runner's high.

"After cutting, they get this endorphin dump for 90 to 120 seconds, but then a tidal wave of guilt and shame usually comes afterwards, which might prompt them to cut again," Cloyd said.

If you suspect your child is cutting, don't overreact or try to control the behavior. Ask your child – in a direct and caring way – if they are cutting. If they are, ask what is hurting them emotionally.

Then seek professional help.

"They need a trained professional who is experienced in dealing with self-harm to help them learn to cope with emotions in a more adaptive way," Cloyd said.

If you suspect your child is cutting, don't overreact or try to control the behavior.

Teen Suicide: An Alarming Trend

It's every parent's worst nightmare and it's on the rise. In 2016, suicide became the No. 2 leading cause of death for U.S. teens after staying at No. 3 and even decreasing in the 1980s and 1990s. One reason: teen suicide attempts may be more likely to be lethal.

That's why it's essential for loved ones to act on concerns. Four out of five teens who attempt suicide give clear warning signs, such as talking about suicide or being preoccupied with death, losing interest in normal activities, putting affairs in order or giving away prized possessions.

High-profile suicides in the media or the community can serve as a trigger. This phenomenon is called suicide contagion. If you're worried about your child:

- Talk about it. Don't be afraid to ask: "Do you want to kill yourself?"
- Remove access to guns, knives, prescription and over-the-counter medications, ropes and belts.
- Seek professional help immediately.



Trophy-Free Self-Esteem: Get It with Grit

Self-esteem isn't about winning. It's about what you learn along the way.

"Confidence is the key word," said Teri Echtenkamp, LIMHP, CHI Health psychotherapist. "Kids with self-esteem know their self-worth, their abilities. They can be confident in struggle or in success."

Following the self-esteem buzz of the late 1980s, researchers found this: "The best way to build self-esteem is in activities that are useful and

challenging," Echtenkamp said.

That doesn't necessarily mean organized sports or academic achievements. It can be a casual hobby or volunteer work which is personally meaningful.

Just remember that self-esteem isn't about success. "It's about growing grit and resilience," Echtenkamp said. "You build self-esteem out of struggle."

Set Limits for Strong Kids

Healthy habits are essential, so set limits and stick with them. "It's the hard and boring part of being a parent, but it's essential," said Teri Echtenkamp, LIMHP, CHI Health psychotherapist.



9 to 11 hours sleep for ages 6 to 13 and 8 to 10 hours sleep for ages 14 to 17



More fruits, vegetables, grains and healthy proteins and less sugary snacks and energy drinks



An hour a day of structured sports or unstructured play



Good digital media habits



Create family media plan at healthychildren.org

Building Kids Up: The Parents' Role

Talk about your own failures. Let kids see how you handle struggles.



Participate in activities that challenge you. Talk about hurdles and progress.



Practice habits you want your kids to adopt. Put your cellphone down at dinner and listen.



Compare your child to others. But do have and communicate standards.



Put yourself down. Even toddlers pick up on negative self-talk.



Be a lawnmower or snow blower. Let your children clear their own paths forward.

Mood Swings, Aggression, Depression - It's Not a Phase



Seek professional help if:

- Your child's behavior interferes with daily life or the family's functioning.
- Disagreements about your child strain your marriage or partnership.
- Your other children are unhappy, frightened or upset by a sibling's behavior/response to behavior.

The teen years can be a roller coaster of accelerated hormones, plummeting moods and startling behaviors. Thankfully, most adolescents manage to stay on track.

But how do you know if normal teenage angst has turned the corner into clinical anxiety? If teen aggression is endangering their development? Or

worse, if moodiness is putting them at risk for suicide?

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), one in five young adults lives with a mental health condition, while 50 percent of all lifetime mental illnesses begins by age 14.

"If you're worried, tell someone," said Hugo Gonzalez, MD, CHI Health

psychiatrist. "An easy first step is to talk with your doctor to rule out other physical health conditions, then ask for help finding a mental health specialist. Anxiety and depression are serious problems – not something teens are going to outgrow. Getting the right help early is extremely important."

Mental Illness: 10 Warning Signs*

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1 Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks</p> <p>2 Seriously trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so</p> <p>3 Severe out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors</p> <p>4 Sudden, overwhelming fear for no reason</p> | <p>5 Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or weight gain</p> <p>6 Seeing, hearing or believing things that are not real</p> <p>7 Repeatedly using drugs or alcohol</p> <p>8 Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits</p> | <p>9 Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still</p> <p>10 Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities</p> |
|--|---|--|

*From the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

Empower Your Kids to Handle Peer Pressure

Finding out your child's friends are involved in risky behaviors puts parents in a quandary.

Staying away from alcohol, drugs, vaping and sex is standard parental guidance. But teens, even in the same family, handle this part of growing up differently. The key is to keep communication lines open, know your teenager and help them learn how to navigate friendships when risky behaviors are involved.

"When parents always take the lead in handling conflict resolution in their child's life, they also take away their ability to problem solve and figure out who they are as individuals," said Sarah Voss, LIMHP, CHI Health psychotherapist.

Have your child try **STEPS** to problem solve. **State** the issue as specifically as possible. **Think** of at least three solutions without judging them. **Examine** the solutions for pros and cons, including potential consequences. **Pick** one solution to try. **See** if it worked. If not, chose another solution.



Simple Ways to Break the Silence - Conversation Starters

"How are you?" It's a question we ask, usually without expecting a serious answer. But if we talk more openly about mental health, struggles many share could be brought to light – where there's support.

If you're concerned about a friend or loved one, try starting a conversation. Some approaches from mentalhealth.gov:

- "I've been worried about you. Can we talk about what you are experiencing? If not, who are you comfortable talking to?"
- "It seems like you are going through a difficult time. How can I help you to find help?"
- "I'm concerned about your safety. Have you thought about harming yourself or others?"

If you are struggling, tell someone you trust. These are delicate conversations. Some are better at offering and accepting support than others, and misunderstandings are inevitable. But making an effort can make a world of difference.



CHI Health

**For help and answers call
402-717-HOPE**

**CHI Health Omaha/Council Bluffs
Metro Locations**

Creighton University Medical Center
- Bergan Mercy

Immanuel
Lakeside

Lasting Hope Recovery Center

Mercy Council Bluffs
Midlands

Psychiatric Residential
Treatment Facility

Psychiatric Associates clinics:

3308 Samson Way,
Suite 203, Bellevue

2001 S 75th Street,
Suite 100, Omaha

801 Harmony Street,
Suite 302, Council Bluffs

415 S 25th Avenue, Omaha

7101 Newport Avenue, Omaha

16909 Lakeside Hills Court,
Suite 400, Omaha

11109 S 84th Street,
Suite 3841, Papillion

Additional help:

Nebraska Family Helpline
Any Problem. Any Time.

1-888-866-8660

Boys Town National Hotline

1-800-448-3000

National Suicide
Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

Red Nacional de
Prevención del Suicidio

1-888-628-9454

CHIhealth.com/Behavioral

*If you are a danger to yourself or others, or know
someone who is, call 911.*