

#Children'sMentalHealthMatter

Children's Mental Health Matters – this is not just a campaign slogan for the celebration of Children's Mental Health Awareness Week which is celebrated nationally the first full week of May but also Mental Health Month. It is a fact, although often an overlooked fact in the lives of children, that too often we have not taken into consideration the whole child—physical, emotional, educational and mental health—as we work to provide healthy environments for them. As society has changed, so have the stresses on families and children.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General ((2015), 20% of the nation's children experience a diagnosable metal illness in any given year (this equates to 5 million of our children under age 18) such as anxiety, rapid mood changes, disruptive behavior disorders. Symptoms can range from inability to cope with daily problems to excessive complaint of physical ailments, frequent outbursts of anger, excessive worrying, and frequent temper tantrums. One in 10 youth under the age of 18 experience a major depression at some point in their youth—and a large percentage of these go untreated—for a variety of reasons including lack of appropriate and accessible resources, the stigma associated with mental illness and treatment and the lack of funding. One can estimate that these numbers are applicable to Prince George's County also.

The above data is an indication of the need to continue efforts promoting awareness and information regarding resources, efforts to reduce stigma and continued advocacy for more appropriate, available, culturally competent mental health services throughout our County. The Prince George's County Children's Mental Health Work Group as well as all our partners who are school and community champions are working to promote positive mental health information and resources for children. We know that strong resilient children and families are value added resources for our communities and the County. We believe we are all part of the village which can contribute this as a resource to Prince George's County. Our efforts will continue to grow because we are committed to supporting the needs of our children and families and we value the important contributions they can and do make to the progress of Prince George's County.

Join us on **Friday, May 11th** at the **Kentland Community Center, 2413 Pinebrook Avenue, Landover, Maryland from 6 to 8 pm** for our ***Come Out N' Play*** event featuring free food prizes, games and fun activities along with a number of vendors who will have information regarding resources and services for children and families. For more information, contact NJohnson2@co.pg.md.us.

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Prince George's Children's Mental Health Work Group