



Mental Health Essentials for Parents:

Keep in Mind

- Don't "pathologize" children and teens' emotional states - avoid diagnosing
 - Grief, loss, anger
 - Honor feelings
 - Follow up if persisten
- Mental illness is a common health condition that affects 1 in 5 people and can get better with treatment
- When children get most of their info from media will tend to stigmatize and not realize most with mental illness can lead productive, fulfilling lives
- When children exposed to accurate, non-stigmatized info tend to be more accepting and feel less alone
- Diagnosis is not an exact science - simply a description of cluster of symptoms, not an explanation, not final
- Behavior is communication - kids aren't acting out, they are reaching out
- Approach behavior with curiosity, what is my child trying to communicate?
- You don't need to respond to children's behavior right away - pause for reflection when needed
- Refrain from trying to fix everything for your child - recognize who "owns" any given problem

