Breaking the Silence through Education

West Long Branch Public Schools

Special Parent Night Event
May 15th, 2025
6:00 p.m.
Location: Media Center

"Just Talk About It"

This interactive presentation is an introduction to mental health, which is designed to train adults on how to recognize the warning signs of stress, anxiety, depression, and crisis in adolescents. **Just Talk About It** will educate adults who support adolescents to look beyond stigma and be able to recognize the onset of symptoms in themselves and their peers. Participants will discuss ways to assist others to cultivate positive coping skills and the ability to ask for help.

Learning Objectives

- Develop an understanding of adolescent brain development and the impact of prolonged elevated stress levels on brain chemistry.
- Identify signs and symptoms of common mental health challenges among adolescents including depression and anxiety.
- Identify signs and symptoms of suicide ideation and health-harming behavior.

Why it Matters

The age of onset of most psychiatric disorders is typically during adolescence. Research studies have demonstrated that one in four teens will experience a mental health challenge this year, but fewer than 20% of those will seek treatment. Stigma and shame are sometimes the greatest barriers to treatment. Untreated mental health issues often lead to destructive behaviors, including self-harm, disordered eating, substance use, and suicide ideation. Suicide is the second leading cause of death of individuals between the ages of 10 and 24, and it is thought that at least 25 attempts are made for every completed teen suicide. Mental health challenges and suicide ideation can be addressed with treatment when warning signs and symptoms are recognized.

How it is Effective

The primary goal of **Just Talk About It** is to increase the knowledge about anxiety, depression, and suicide, while increasing the likelihood a student self-reports and engages in help-seeking behavior. At the completion of the program, participants are able to identify the following:

- Stigma regarding mental health.
- The most common causes and effects of stress and anxiety.
- Negative and positive coping skills.
- Symptoms of the most common mental health challenges.
- Indicators of a mental health crisis.
- The warning signs most often associated with self-harm and suicide.
- How to help a student and/or friend who is experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis.
- Risk and protective factors.

Meet the Presenters:
(LINKED BELOW)

Colin **Samantha**