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Teens and Their Mental Health

It comes as no surprise to us that a recent New York Times article reports that **most American teens see anxiety and depression as major problems among their peers**, even more than bullying, drugs, or gangs. This cuts across all socio-economic lines and demographic groups.

We at PPA realized this over a decade ago, when we hired the first of our mental health counselors. We now have four counselors/psychologists in our office. **Parker Pediatrics is a national leader in this area of integrated care**, and has been the subject of numerous national articles. In addition, Dr. Rabinowitz has spoken at national conferences on this subject. Next October, both he and Lindsey Einhorn, our head psychologist, will be speaking at the American Academy of Pediatrics' Annual Conference.

Let's look at some widely accepted facts about childhood mental health. **Twenty percent of children have a diagnosable mental health disorder.** Only 20-25% ever receive treatment. Only 50% of teens with depression are identified before adulthood. **Treatment is highly successful.** Gaining access to treatment is a major challenge. Integrative care was associated with significant decreases in depression scores and improved response and remission rates at 12 months compared with treatment as usual.

Parent surveys from our office reveal that **parents are very satisfied with our services** in this area, as well as the convenience, with the large majority of teens benefitting from the services they received.

Why is it so important to be discussing this issue at this time? Surprisingly, **spring is the time**

of year with the largest number of mental health related issues in teens—suicides, school shootings included. Year after year, we see a large demand for appointments each spring, even to the point, unfortunately, of having waiting lists that could take weeks to get in.

What can parents do? Hug your child each day. Talk with your children. Have dinner together as a family. Limit and monitor your child's screen time, especially social media and video games. Look for signs of depression—poor grades, drug use, losing friends, delinquency, truancy, and isolation. Realize one's family history too. Parents, take care of yourself also. Finally, **lock up all weapons.** Even though your child may have had excellent weapon safety instructions, when something snaps in a teen's head, all previous lessons, and common sense, escape!

Vaccine Preventable Diseases

You have all, no doubt, been reading about the outbreak of some vaccine preventable diseases in our country, mainly measles and mumps. As you also probably know, our practice has had the policy of only accepting patients who agree to vaccinate. This is both for the safety of our patients, but also due to our conviction that vaccines are safe, effective, and important for all children to have.

We applaud the efforts of both state and federal lawmakers who are trying to rid the personal, or philosophical, exemption. Groups with no scientific evidence have no right to put the rest of us in danger. (Could you imagine a group who didn't believe in stopping at red lights for personal reasons?) Vaccines are safe, effective, and save lives. A century ago, half of all children would not survive into their teens due to these diseases.

It is also worth mentioning that the "alternate schedule" by Dr. Bob is not accepted by any recognized organization, and is thought to be dangerous for children. He is now under discipline by the Medical Board of California, and has been placed on probation.

We congratulate our parents on making a wise decision on behalf of their children.

School Absences — How Much is too Much?

Good attendance habits at school are linked to good health, as well as more success at school. Chronic absence is defined by missing 18 days per year. Allowing a child to miss even two days during the first month puts him/her at higher risk for chronic absence.

Reasons to stay home from school include:

- A temperature greater than 101
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Some rashes
- A bad cough
- An earache or toothache

If other reasons exist, such as anxiety, bullying, or a chronic illness, these need to be addressed. Stomachaches, headaches, or dizziness are often signs of anxiety. If the cause is not known, it needs to be found. Other absences, such as vacations or team events, should be minimized too.

This and That

This year's **flu vaccine seems to be 60% effective**. While that may sound low, the vaccine seems to make the disease milder and prevent complications. And 60% is not bad—if seat belts saved 60% of lives, that would be huge!

Our schedule is now open though the summer. Call now for an appointment.

Remember, you can **text us** at our main number, 303-841-2905, primarily for questions for our phone triage nurse during office hours.

As technology advances, we are looking into such areas as **virtual visits** (for such appointments as med reviews, counseling, or rashes), making **appointments online**, and allowing parents to **print vaccine records or health forms online**. We will let you know how these progress. At a future time, we will also be asking for volunteers for parent focus groups to help us in our planning according to your needs and desires.

Remember the **sunscreen** as the days get longer!

Electronic cigarettes and Juuling are even worse for your teen's health than we had first thought. Talk to your children about these.

Scholarship applicants: each year we give two \$500 scholarships to graduating seniors who have been patients of ours, and who are seeking a career in a health related industry. To apply, go to our website and download [2019 Scholarship Application](#). Deadline is April 26 and we will announce the winners the week of May 3.

“Quotable Quotes”

The following conversations occurred in our office.

Provider to three-year-old: “Where are you going for Christmas?”

Three-year-old: “You tell me.”

Six-year-old: “My teacher is a painter.”

Three-year-old sib: “And I know what sounds monkeys make!”

14-year-old: “I have to get another physical? I already had one at school!”

Parent: “Now you're going to get your real physical.”

Doctor.: “You're 80 percentile for height.”

13-year-old: “My friends must all be in that other 20%.”

Doctor: “What are you going to be when you grow up?”

Six-year-old: “Seven.”

Provider: “What brings you in?”

Mom: “They each have a wart.”

As provider types information in the computer, eight-year-old whispers: “He's looking up how to do it on 'You Tube'.”

If you enjoy these quotes, you can purchase Dr. Rabinowitz's book, [Cute Kidbits, Funny Conversations Kids Share With Their Pediatrician](#), on Amazon or at the office.

Meet The Providers

Parker Peds (PP): You started the practice in 1982. What's changed the most?

Dr. Rabinowitz: Advances in technology, such as the electronic record, and the amazing growth in Parker.

PP: You're working less now. What are you doing?

Dr. Rabinowitz: Golfing and skiing when able.

PP: Where do you do these mostly?

Dr. Rabinowitz: Valley Country Club and Beaver Creek..

PP: We heard you've played at some special golf courses.

Dr. Rabinowitz: I've been fortunate to play the Old Course in Scotland, Pebble Beach and TPC Sawgrass to name a few. But I've yet to visit Augusta or get a hole in one!



PP: You grew up in Parker.

Rich: Indeed. I swam for the Pi-ner, and attended Regis High.

PP: What other hobbies do you have?

Rich: I like scuba diving. I once did free diving (no cage) with a tiger shark in Fiji!

PP: Wow! Any other interests?

Rich: I really enjoy photography.

You can actually see some of my work in our office.

PP: And you're celebrating an anniversary this year?

Rich: That right. It's my 20th year here at Parker Pediatrics!

