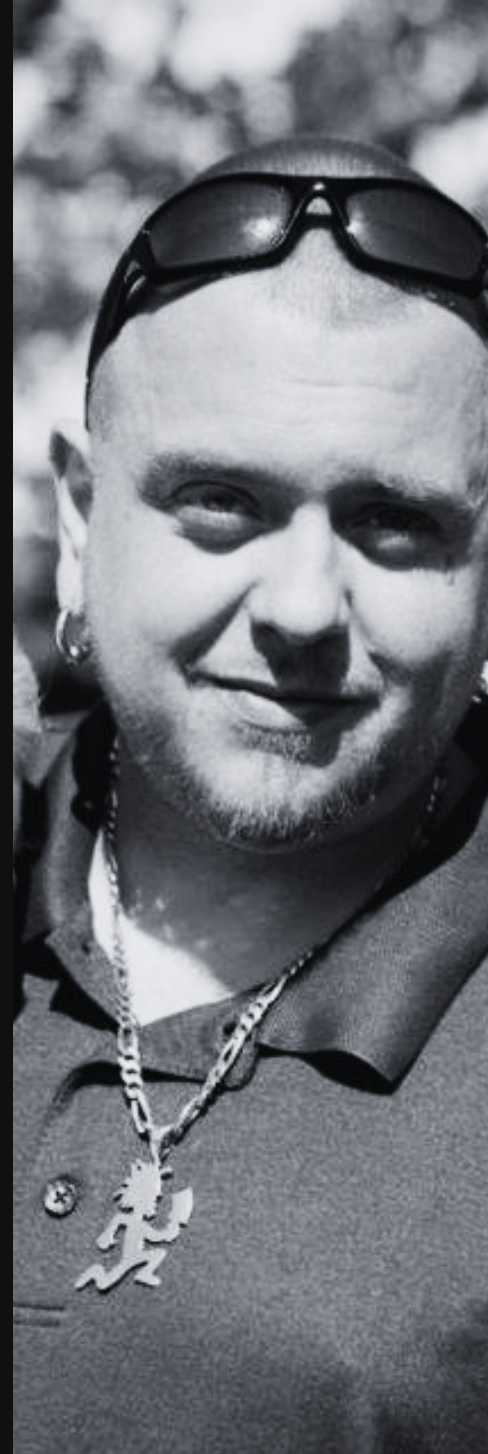


THE DIARC

Magazine



Mental Health Awareness Month

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Christina's Mom and Brother both were Mental Health Patients. During their treatment Affinity Patient Advocacy supported them in their treatment.



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Dedication from

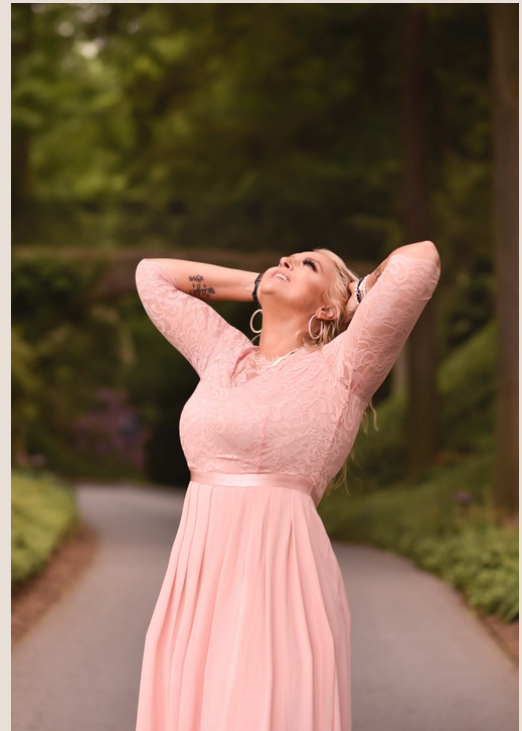
Christina DiArcangelo

To all those who have struggled in silence, battled their inner demons, and found strength within their vulnerability, this magazine is dedicated to you.

In a world that often stigmatizes mental health, we stand together to break the chains of silence and create a space where voices are heard, stories are shared, and healing is embraced. Your journey, no matter how challenging, has not gone unnoticed.

To the courageous individuals who have found the courage to seek help and support, and to the dedicated professionals like Affinity Patient Advocacy, who tirelessly work to provide care and guidance, this magazine celebrates your resilience, compassion, and unwavering commitment to mental well-being.

May this publication be a beacon of hope, a source of inspiration, and a sanctuary of knowledge. Through our collective efforts, we aim to foster understanding, empathy, and empowerment, erasing the stigma surrounding mental health and paving the way for a brighter, more compassionate future.



To all the survivors, advocates, and allies who lend their voices to this magazine's pages, your bravery and authenticity illuminate the path to healing. Your stories remind us that no one is alone in their struggles, and that together, we can create a world that embraces and nurtures mental well-being for all.

This dedication is a tribute to your strength, your resilience, and your unwavering spirit. May this magazine serve as a catalyst for change, fostering a society that values mental health as an integral part of overall well-being.

Finally, this magazine is dedicated to my mother, Paula S. DiArcangelo and my brother, Albert J. DiArcangelo, Jr. I hope that all the people that have judged you through your lifetimes, will now realize that nothing was ever done on purpose. I miss you both every day.

I write this dedication with tears in my eyes and a longing in my heart for you both to still be here on this earth.

With gratitude and a deep commitment to the cause!

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Breaking the Cycle: Empowering Families Struggling with Mental Health and Opioid Abuse

Melisa Frain

For Mental health awareness I would like to talk about some of my family members. Some members of my family have mental health issues and abuse opioids. It has happened my whole life and I have seen what it does to not only themselves but to friends and family as well. Some of my family members went to jail because they were not getting help for their mental health. So they used opioids. That's why I love being apart of APA because I know what it is to have no one help you when you need it the most.

My mother has been struggling with chronic pain for over 20 yrs. At the beginning, opioids were given to her instead of trying to get to the bottom of what was causing this pain. This caused her to become dependent on opioids instead of other healthy solutions.



My cousin has had mental health issues since an early age. It caused problems with his imitate family so he started living with a family member that was taking opioids for there chronic illness. Therefore he had easy access to them. It got to the point that he started spiraling and taking harder drugs that led to being arrest and jail time.

It makes me mad I couldn't help. It makes me mad that no one took the time to really help them. There was no resources or information on how to help without Opioids. Opioids have taken some of my family members away from me. We need to pay more attention to Mental health and how to help them without Opioids.

I am so glad that Christina DiArcangelo made this non profit so we can help as many people as we can to get the help they need. I wish there was something like this when my family so desperately needed it. Maybe things would have been better.

We can't change the past but we definitely can make the future a much better place. I am really looking forward to being apart of that.

The substantial prison population in the United States is strongly connected to drug-related offences. While the exact rates of inmates with substance use disorders (SUDs) is difficult to measure, some research shows that an estimated 65% percent of the United States prison population has an active SUD. Another 20% percent did not meet the official criteria for an SUD, but were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of their crime.



The Single Mom's viewpoint of raising a child with mental health disabilities

Christina DiArcangelo

CEO, Chairwoman, Affinity Patient Advocacy

Raising a child is a challenging and rewarding experience, but it can be even more challenging when you are a single mother raising a child with mental health disabilities. As someone who has been in this position, I know firsthand how difficult it can be to navigate the demands of parenthood while also managing the needs of a child with mental health disabilities.

One of the biggest challenges of raising a child with mental health disabilities is finding the right treatment and support. It can be frustrating and overwhelming to navigate the healthcare system, especially when you are doing it on your own. It is sometimes also challenging working within your school district to ensure that your child's mental health disabilities are being addressed.



As a single mom raising a child with mental health disabilities, it is important to advocate for your child, seek out the resources and support they need. This might include working with doctors and mental health professionals, seeking out community resources, your school district, a patient advocacy group, and joining support groups for parents of children with mental health disabilities.

Another challenge of being a single mom raising a child with mental health disabilities is managing the demands of daily life while also managing your child's needs. This requires a lot of flexibility and patience. This can also feel isolating for a single mother. You should not let that be the situation. Speak with your trusted family members and friends for support. You should never feel embarrassed to share with your inner circle.

Another challenge of being a single mom raising a child with mental health disabilities is managing the demands of daily life while also managing your child's needs. This requires a lot of flexibility and patience. This can also feel isolating for a single mother. You should not let that be the situation. Speak with your trusted family members and friends for support. You should never feel embarrassed to share with your inner circle.

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It is important to prioritize self-love by engaging in activities that bring you joy and relaxation, practicing mindfulness and meditation, healthy eating, hydration, regular exercise, and seeking out professional help when needed. Remember that taking care of yourself is essential to being the best parent you can be for your child. Your behaviour also demonstrates to your child the importance of self-love.



One of the biggest lessons I learned from raising a child with mental health disabilities is the importance of advocating for my child, seeking out the right treatment and support. I worked closely with doctors and mental health professionals to find the right treatment plan for my child, and I made a conscious effort to educate myself about paediatric mental health and the resources available to us.

I also made a conscious effort to communicate with my child about their mental health challenges in an age-appropriate way. I explained to my child that mental illness is a condition that affects many people and that it is nothing to be ashamed of. By being open and honest with my child, I was able to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and model healthy coping skills. My child has also been exposed to other family members that have mental health disabilities which has assisted in the stigmatization.

While raising a child with mental health disabilities can be challenging, it is also an opportunity to model resilience and strength for your child. By showing your child that you can overcome challenges and manage your own mental health, you are teaching them important life skills that will serve them well in the future. Also, being able to share examples from my own childhood living with two family members that had mental health disabilities has also helped.

Finally, it is important to remember that you are not alone. As I mentioned above, sometimes it can feel very isolating to you as a single mother but there are many resources and support available to single moms raising children with mental health disabilities, including therapy and counseling, support groups, and community resources.

By seeking out help and support, you can reduce the stress and demands of parenting while also managing your child's mental health. Remember that taking care of yourself is essential to being the best parent you can be for your child.

In conclusion, being a single mom raising a child with mental health disabilities can be challenging, but it is also an opportunity to advocate for your child, educate yourself about mental health, and model resilience and strength. By seeking out help and support, prioritizing self-care, and communicating openly with your child, you can manage the demands of parenting while also managing your child's mental health. Remember that you are not alone, and that there are many resources like Affinity Patient Advocacy and support available to help you navigate these challenges.



Addressing the Dual Crisis: Mental Health and Opioid Abuse in the United States

Jose Ramon Riestra Jr

President & CEO, Empire Management Group

Mental health and opioid abuse are two of the most serious public health issues in the United States today. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, more than 2 million Americans have an opioid use disorder, and more than 115 people die from an opioid overdose every day. Mental health conditions are also common, with an estimated 1 in 5 adults in the United States experiencing a mental illness in a given year.

There is a strong link between mental health and opioid abuse. People with mental health conditions are more likely to abuse opioids, and vice versa. For example, people with depression are more likely to be prescribed opioids, and people who abuse opioids are more likely to experience depression.



There are a number of reasons why people with mental health conditions may be more likely to abuse opioids. One reason is that opioids can provide temporary relief from the symptoms of mental illness, such as pain, anxiety, and depression. Another reason is that people with mental health conditions may be more likely to self-medicate with opioids, rather than seeking professional help.

Opioid abuse can have a devastating impact on people's lives. It can lead to addiction, overdose, and death. It can also damage relationships, ruin careers, and lead to homelessness.

There are a number of things that can be done to address the problem of mental health and opioid abuse. One important step is to increase awareness of the issue. People need to know that there is a link between mental health and opioid abuse, and that they are not alone if they are struggling with either condition.

Another important step is to improve access to mental health care and treatment. People with mental health conditions need to be able to get the help they need, when they need it. This includes access to medication, therapy, and support groups.

Finally, it is important to break down the stigma associated with mental health and opioid abuse. People need to know that it is okay to ask for help, and that there is no shame in seeking treatment.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health or opioid abuse, there is help available. Please reach out to a mental health professional or a crisis hotline for support. You are not alone.

Here are some resources that can help:

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Having an all-women executive board of directors can bring several benefits.

In this article, I am going to outline six potential advantages of developing an all-women executive board of directors. I have created and developed an all women led executive board for one of my organizations and want to share some the advantages that I see.

The **first advantage** is gender diversity. Purposely developing an all-women board ensures gender diversity in decision-making processes. This gender diversity brings a variety of perspectives, experiences, and insights to the table, which can lead to creating a more well-rounded and inclusive decision-making process. By doing so, it helps ensure that the organization's actions and strategies consider the unique needs and challenges faced by women in society.

The **second advantage** is representation and empowerment. An all-women executive board can serve as a powerful symbol of representation and empowerment for women. It sends a message that women are valued and capable of assuming leadership positions. This can inspire and encourage other women to pursue leadership roles, fostering a culture of female empowerment within the organization and beyond.

The **third advantage** is addressing gender-specific issues. Non-profit organizations often work on issues that disproportionately affect women, such as reproductive rights, gender-based violence, and economic empowerment. Having an all-women executive board can bring a deeper understanding of these issues and ensure that they are given the necessary attention and resources. The executive board members can bring personal experiences, expertise, and networks to tackle these challenges effectively.

The **fourth advantage** is creating a safe space to share information freely. Some women may feel more comfortable discussing certain topics or sharing their perspectives in a women-only environment. An all-women executive board can create a safe space where these discussions can take place without fear of judgment or marginalization. This can lead to more open and honest dialogue, promoting collaboration and problem-solving.

The **fifth advantage** is role modeling and mentorship. An all-women executive board can serve as role models for women and girls, showcasing the possibilities and potential in leadership. Executive Board members can actively engage in mentorship and support programs to nurture and guide emerging female leaders within the organization. This mentorship can help address barriers faced by women in their professional development, creating a pipeline for future women leaders.

The **sixth advantage** is breaking stereotypes and biases. By having an all-women executive board, stereotypes and biases associated with women's leadership abilities can be challenged and debunked. It demonstrates that women possess the skills, expertise, and qualifications needed to make sound decisions and lead effectively. This can help break down barriers and biases that may exist in society, paving the way for greater gender equality and inclusivity.

It is important to note that while an all-women executive board can bring significant benefits, diversity in all its forms should be valued and encouraged. Inclusivity is about ensuring that voices from different backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences are represented at all levels of an organization. We are in the era of actively promoting women in our country and I believe it is up to us to make a global impact.

Affinity Patient Advocacy Meet the New Board



Christina DiArcangelo
CEO, Chairwoman



Tiffany Watkins
Vice President



Melisa Frain
Secretary

Living with Immediate Family Members Suffering from Mental Health disabilities

Christina DiArcangelo

CEO, Chairwoman, Affinity Patient Advocacy

As the CEO of Affinity Patient Advocacy, I feel that it is my duty to share my experiences growing up in a household with two (2) family members with extreme mental health disabilities. Since it is the month of May and it is Mental Health Awareness month, I would be reminisced if I did not share from my heart this message.

Growing up with family members who struggle with mental health disabilities can be a complex and challenging experience. As someone who grew up with a mother and brother with mental health disabilities, I know firsthand how difficult it can be to navigate these challenges. I did not learn about my mother's mental health disabilities until I was graduating high school and was advised that my mother would not be coming to my graduation because she could not leave our home. One of the mental health disabilities that she was suffering from is called Agoraphobia. Agoraphobia is a type of anxiety disorder which makes it difficult for people to leave their environments with ease.



I believe that one of the biggest challenges of growing up with a mentally ill family members was the lack of understanding and stigma surrounding mental health. When I was younger, I did not fully understand what my mother and brother were going through. I would often blame myself for their struggles, thinking that if I could just be a better daughter/sister, they would be happy. I constantly put blame on myself which continued throughout my lifetime leading up to their deaths. My brother passed away January 9, 2022, and my mother passed away January 13, 2023.

Over time, I came to understand that mental disabilities is are a complex condition that requires professional help and support. I have been blessed to work in the clinical research industry and work on mental health therapeutic areas in my career. While, I have worked on clinical programs supporting mental health therapeutic areas, I learned how to be an ally for my family members by advocating for them, offering support, and encouraging them to seek help when they needed it. However, often my family members resisted the encouragement, advocacy, and support. Even though they may have pushed back on my multiple offers for help, I kept trying. I never gave up on them and fought for them up until they took their last breathes. They were my family members, and I miss them every day.

Another challenge of growing up with a mentally ill family member is the impact it can have on family dynamics. Mental illness can cause tension and conflict within families, and it can be challenging to maintain healthy relationships when everyone is struggling. This was very, very difficult. My father tried his best to make sure that our household was a peaceful environment, but it was not an easy task for him to handle. My father had a very challenging childhood riddled with abuse, alcoholism, and mental health disabilities within his immediate family. My father did not always have the tools at his disposable that would have assisted him with disabilities that arose within our household.

In my family, we had to work diligently to establish open communication, and we did not have healthy boundaries. Most of the time, our family dynamics were tumultuous and very difficult to navigate. When I was able to start working legally at age 16, I did so. I wanted to escape the environment that I was in. Working was my escape. Which meant that I overworked which was not healthy for me, but I was looking for an escape from the madness in my childhood home.

One of the biggest lessons I learned from growing up with a mentally disabled family member is the importance of self-care. It can be easy to get caught up in the needs of others and neglect your own needs when you are in a caregiving role. However, it is essential to take care of yourself first, so you can be a better support system for your loved ones.

Much later in my life, after a great deal of therapy, I made a conscious effort to prioritize self- care by practicing mindfulness, engaging in hobbies I enjoyed, and seeking out my own therapy when I needed it. By taking care of my own mental health, I am better able to be there for my family members when they need me.

Much later in my life, after a great deal of therapy, I made a conscious effort to prioritize self- care by practicing mindfulness, engaging in hobbies I enjoyed, and seeking out my own therapy when I needed it. By taking care of my own mental health, I am better able to be there for my family members when they need me.

While growing up with a mentally ill family members can be challenging, it is also an opportunity for growth and resilience. It taught me the importance of compassion, empathy, and understanding. It also made me more resilient and adaptable, as I learned how to navigate difficult situations and cope with stress. It has also aided me in being the patient advocate and clinical research executive that I am today.

I am grateful for the lessons I learned from growing up with mentally disabled family members. While it was not always easy, it shaped me into the person I am today. I am proud to advocate for mental health patients and share my experiences with their family members to bring them solace, peace, and encouragement. It has taught me the value of self-care, open communication, and empathy, and it inspired me to pursue a career in mental health advocacy and support. It also helps me understand my own child who also has mental health disabilities.

If you are currently in a caregiving role for a family member with mental illness, I encourage you to prioritize your own needs first, seek support when you need it for yourself, and remember that you are not alone. There are resources and support available to help you navigate these challenges, like Affinity Patient Advocacy, and it is essential to take care of your own mental health as well as your loved ones.



Understanding Mental Health: A Child's Perspective on Parental Conflict

Nitika Dargan

Board Member, Affinity Patient Advocacy

Growing up in a household where parents frequently engage in conflict can have a profound impact on a child's mental health and overall well-being. Children are highly perceptive, and witnessing ongoing disagreements between their parents can leave them feeling confused, anxious, and emotionally vulnerable. In this article, we will explore the effects of parental conflict on a child's mental health and the importance of fostering a supportive environment that promotes emotional well-being.

1. Emotional Impact:

Children who frequently observe their parents fighting often experience a range of negative emotions. They may feel overwhelmed, fearful, and insecure, unsure of how to navigate the tense atmosphere at home. These emotions can lead to increased stress levels, anxiety, and even depression. The continuous exposure to conflict may disrupt a child's ability to regulate their emotions effectively, causing long-term psychological distress.

2. Cognitive Development:

Parental conflict can hinder a child's cognitive development and academic performance. The constant exposure to arguments and tension may create distractions and impair their ability to concentrate on schoolwork. Additionally, the emotional toll of witnessing parental conflict can hinder a child's memory retention, problem-solving skills, and overall cognitive abilities.

3. Interpersonal Relationships:

Children who grow up in an environment characterized by frequent parental conflict may face challenges in forming healthy relationships with others. They may struggle with trust, have difficulty expressing emotions, and exhibit aggressive or withdrawn behaviors. Witnessing unresolved conflicts between parents can shape a child's perception of relationships, making it crucial to address these issues early on to prevent potential difficulties in their future interactions.

4. Self-Esteem and Self-Identity:

Children who experience ongoing parental conflict may develop lower self-esteem and struggle with forming a positive self-identity. The constant exposure to negativity and discord can leave them feeling responsible for the conflict or believing they are the cause of their parents' disagreements. This can contribute to a negative self-image, self-doubt, and a lack of confidence in their abilities.

5. Coping Strategies and Support:

To mitigate the adverse effects of parental conflict, it is essential to provide children with the necessary support and coping strategies. Open and honest communication can help children understand that the conflicts are not their fault and provide reassurance of their parents' love for them. Encouraging the expression of emotions and offering a safe space for discussion can help children process their feelings and develop healthier coping mechanisms.

Seeking professional help, such as therapy or counseling, can also be instrumental in supporting children in navigating the challenges they face due to parental conflict. Therapeutic interventions can provide them with tools to cope with stress, develop resilience, and enhance their overall emotional well-being.

Recognizing the impact of parental conflict on a child's mental health is crucial for fostering a supportive environment that promotes their emotional well-being. Parents must prioritize open communication, address conflicts constructively, and seek help when needed. By creating a nurturing and harmonious atmosphere, parents can help children develop resilience, positive self-esteem, and healthy interpersonal relationships, setting them on a path towards a brighter and healthier future.

Remember, children are the most vulnerable members of our society, and by nurturing their mental health, we pave the way for a more compassionate and resilient generation.

Children Overcoming Social Challenges in Schools

Zachary Phillips

Intern, Affinity Patient Advocacy

With the current climate of the United States schooling system, there is a growing and relentless pressure to excel socially and academically. These expectations can make it hard for students to perform to the standard that is set, especially those with social or educational challenges. No matter the circumstances, it is still the school's job to ensure the student is receiving the absolute best education for their circumstances. This short paper will shed some light on problems currently faced by children who need support in school, and what schools are currently doing right to combat the issue.

The struggles these students must deal with come in a wide variety from understanding social cues to following simple directions. These social cues are usually through nonverbal communications such as general body language and facial expressions. When those fundamentals of communication are not understood by a child it manifests into more troubles when trying to make genuine connections with their peers. The unfortunate byproduct of this failed connection with their classmates is most often bullying, which obviously leads to a slew of other problems. Although bullying is a very complex issue with many possible factors, in children there tends to be a lack of empathy instigating the problem. That brings us to what schools are doing well to combat this toxic cycle.

In the current day all well run districts place a heavy emphasis on promoting empathy, conflict resolution, and awareness. The traits listed are important due to how if properly taught, it nurtures a community in the school where acceptance is a given, and exclusion is seen as a problem. Additionally, many schools offer various programs to help children with all different types of special needs learn to adapt to the school environment and be an active participant in social environments. Good counselors will also go around the school or host assemblies where they will choose a certain topic regarding this problem and explain it to the students. It's a great way to spread awareness and a more inclusive attitude at the school, while also giving lessons to the child on how to be genuinely good, upstanding people in their community.

Moreover, schools have implemented programs other than the ones. The most effective of these programs is the utilization of the Individualized Educational Plans or IEPs for short. This not only allows for an extra support system for the student, but also gives accommodations. Most importantly, it outlines the specific goals that should be achieved by the student based on where they're at. The framework this lay is a vital piece of what the child needs to succeed in and outside of class. However, despite the positive impacts these programs make, the system isn't perfect and possesses some shortcomings.

While the schooling system is taking steps to positively impact the students, there is an ever-growing need for resources to be adequately distributed to support these programs. Without the proper amount of resources, the system has no chance in succeeding to help in schools. The other factor that is tied into the resources is staffing. Adequate staffing is vital in providing individualized support and attention to the students who may need them. This individualized support is what makes the programs thrive, so it is imperative that there is enough staff for it to be a successful program. Unfortunately, this funding does not reach all schools equally, meaning the care a student receives can vastly differ from another going through the same programs. To address the shortcomings of the system and ensure there is support for all students equally, it is crucial to focus on staffing and resource allocation.

In conclusion, to address the challenges that these students face it requires an approach that highlights empathy, support, and awareness. Even though schools have been implementing programs such as the IEP, there is still room for improvement. Proper implementation of ways to get more resources and passionate teachers is essential in ensuring each student is getting the support that they deserve to thrive socially and academically. It is important to advocate for these changes as soon as possible so no child is left without these amazing programs in the future. By providing the necessary support systems and resources, an inclusive and supportive learning environment is sure to be nurtured throughout the entire school year.



Nurturing Mental Well-being: Understanding Mental Conditions in the Elderly

Tisha Bhola

Intern, Affinity Patient Advocacy

Recognizing the impact of parental conflict on a child's mental health is crucial for fostering a supportive environment that promotes their emotional well-being. Parents must prioritize open communication, address conflicts constructively, and seek help when needed. By creating a nurturing and harmonious atmosphere, parents can help children develop resilience, positive self-esteem, and healthy interpersonal relationships, setting them on a path towards a brighter and healthier future.

Remember, children are the most vulnerable members of our society, and by nurturing their mental health, we pave the way for a more compassionate and resilient generation.

As we progress through the various stages of life, our bodies undergo a multitude of transformations, and our mental well-being is no exception. In the contemporary era, where we are surrounded by individuals who have dedicated their lives to the field of psychology and have made significant contributions to its understanding, there remains an unfortunate segment of society that is largely neglected in terms of mental health care.

Their psychological state is frequently dismissed and disregarded, not only by themselves but also by those in their immediate vicinity. This blog post endeavours to explore several common mental conditions experienced by older adults while providing insights into how we can actively contribute to their well-being.

The World Health Organization has revealed that approximately 15% of adults aged 60 and above suffer from some form of mental disorder. Moreover, the global population is undergoing rapid aging. It is estimated that between 2015 and 2050, the proportion of older adults worldwide will nearly double, surging from around 12% to 22%.

In absolute terms, this translates to an expected increase from 900 million to 2 billion individuals aged 60 and above. Older people face distinctive challenges to their physical and mental health that necessitate recognition and attention.

Regrettably, it often goes unnoticed that these very individuals bestowed upon us the gift of life, nurtured and supported us unwaveringly. It is therefore our moral obligation to provide them with support during their moments of despair.

At such an advanced age, even engaging in basic daily activities can be overwhelming. It is unrealistic to expect someone who is enduring significant challenges and first-hand trauma to effortlessly navigate their own well-being.

Numerous older adults contend with a range of health issues that engender feelings of inadequacy and burdensomeness upon their families and friends, leading to depressive states. Mental disorders disrupt the cognitive framework and cast a shadow of pessimism, dimming the significance of activities that once held meaning.

The frustration stemming from the desire to remain industrious, yet grappling with physical limitations and fatigue, can exacerbate feelings of worthlessness.

Furthermore, dependence on younger generations for assistance gives rise to guilt and diminished self-esteem. Amidst the chaotic race of life, we may inadvertently overlook the fact that someone has eagerly awaited our return home all day, yearning for quality time filled with laughter and mirth. These are the cherished moments that our parents and grandparents hold dear. It is disheartening to acknowledge that while diseases such as cancer and tuberculosis can be effectively treated, combating the scourge of loneliness and hopelessness proves to be an arduous task. Adaptation to drastically altered lifestyles, after having established their own comfortable routines over the years and adhering to societal norms and prevailing life arrangements, is not as effortless as we may assume.

Collectively, these factors contribute to issues such as social isolation, depression, anxiety, dementia, substance abuse, and, most gravely, suicidal ideation. Understanding and addressing such mental conditions among the elderly are of paramount importance in promoting their well-being and safeguarding their quality of life. Establishing a compassionate and inclusive environment, fostering social connections, and seeking professional assistance when necessary are all imperative to ensuring the welfare of our elderly population. Together, we possess the capacity to effect positive change in their lives and empower them to gracefully navigate the journey of aging, all the while preserving optimal mental well-being.

ADHD and its impacts on Social Life

Elizabeth Spongr

Intern, Affinity Patient Advocacy

When people think of ADHD, the first image that comes to mind is that of a squirming child sitting in an elementary school classroom, struggling to keep still. And while this stereotype of ADHD does exist, there are many more forms of ADHD and ways that it is expressed.

What is ADHD?

ADHD is a mental disorder caused by a dopamine deficiency in the brain. ADHD is rooted in genetics. According to a 2008 study titled “Attention-deficit-hyperactivity disorder and reward deficiency syndrome”, “People with ADHD have at least one defective gene, the DRD2 gene that makes it difficult for neurons to respond to dopamine, the neurotransmitter that is involved in feelings of pleasure and the regulation of attention.”(Blum et al) As a result, the baseline dopamine level of someone with ADHD is lower than that of someone without it. Consequently, the brain switches focus frequently, looking for sources of dopamine to satisfy its needs. This can manifest itself in many different forms.

Types of ADHD

There are three types of ADHD - the first and most commonly recognized type of ADHD is Hyperactive/Impulsive type. This is the type that the image of the little child has. It manifests in behaviors such as impulsivity, fidgeting, squirming, interrupting, talking too much, and talking out of turn.

The second type of ADHD, formerly called ADD, is Inattentive type. This type is more often diagnosed in adults and has symptoms like difficulty sustaining attention, a weak working memory, difficulty with organization and following detailed instructions, and easily distracted by external stimuli.

The third type of ADHD is combined type, which has symptoms of both hyperactive and inattentive type. This is the most commonly diagnosed form of ADHD.

Impact on Social Life

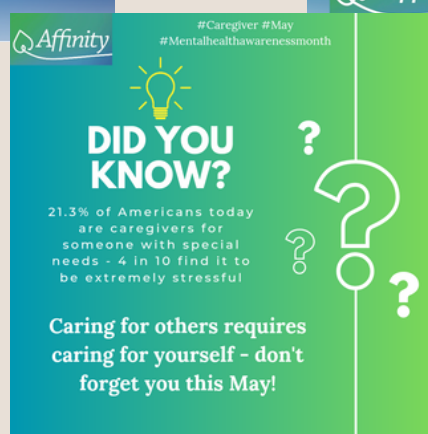
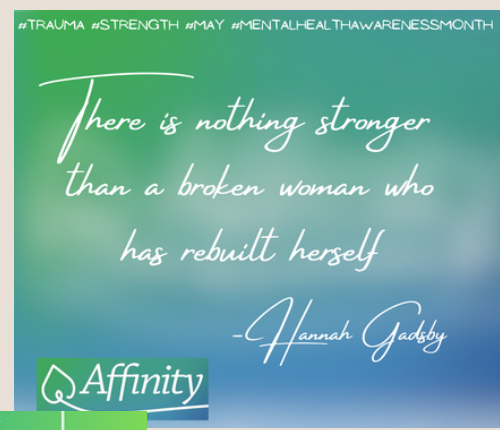
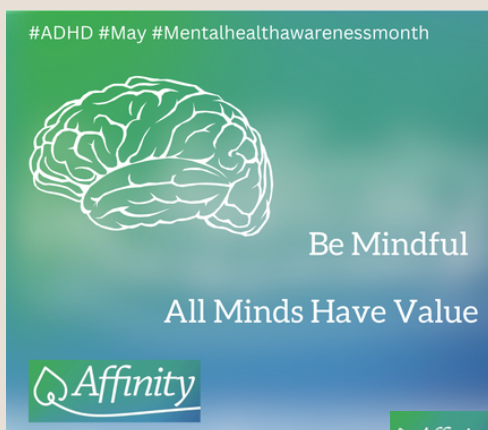
As from the symptoms mentioned above, it is clear as to why ADHD impacts socialization. Social life begins as a child, in school, and can impact someone for their entire life. Children in school with ADHD often struggle to make friends and are rejected by their peers.

Their peers may find someone with hyperactive type loud and obnoxious, or someone with inattentive type spacey and disinterested, despite the fact that these are the results of a disorder that the child can not control. This rejection results in lack of exposure to certain social cues, making it difficult for the ADHDer to communicate with others. It can also impact the child's self esteem, destroying their confidence in social situations and their view of themselves.

These feelings will continue to be impactful on a child as they grow up, and may affect them as teens. As a teenager, someone with ADHD might have poor time management skills, difficulty with emotional regulation, and struggles with inattention, all of which may result in social isolation. Although ADHD is stereotyped as a child's disorder, children with ADHD grow up and become adults with ADHD, which can affect their work and social lives significantly. Adults with ADHD can struggle with time management, procrastination, and starting and finishing tasks. They might have difficulties making new friends due to their undernourished social skills from early on in life and it may be difficult to maintain old friendships.

ADHD - Not Bad, Just Different

Having or knowing someone with ADHD can be difficult. People like to stereotype and judge others, just because their brain works differently. But that's all it is - an ADHD brain is not inherently good or bad, it's just different. Also, since people with ADHD can pivot easily from one task to the next, people with ADHD should recognize ADHD as their superpower. As a society, we should embrace all of the beauties of an individual rather than critique someone. Remember that people may be struggling with more than they let on - save the prejudice and give them a chance.



THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS IN SCHOOLS: WHY IT MATTERS

Samridhi Jain

Intern, Affinity Patient Advocacy

Mental health holds significant importance in overall well-being, especially among students. In today's fast-paced world, the mental health of students has become a critical concern. The pressure to succeed can profoundly impact their well-being. Therefore, it is essential for educational institutions, families and communities to prioritize and support students' mental health, nurturing their growth and success.

Understanding the causes behind their mental health challenges is crucial in promoting a healthy living environment. Several key factors contribute to mental health issues among students:

1. Academic Pressure: One of the primary causes of mental health challenges among students is the pressure to perform academically well. The fear of failure, high expectations from their parents, and the constraint drive for achieving good grades can lead to stress, anxiety, and burnout.

2. Lack of Support System: Insufficient support system can exacerbate mental health issues among students. Limited access to mental health services, societal stigma surrounding mental health, and inadequate resources can hinder students from seeking help and hinder their well-being.

3. Body Shaming: Students often experience bullying and body shaming based on their height, weight, physical appearance, etc., which can cause anxiety, stress and depression.

4. Social Isolation: Many students feel isolated or disconnected from their peers, leading to feelings of sadness, anxiety, reduced self-esteem, self-doubt and self-worth.



Various other factors, such as childhood trauma, phone addiction and social anxiety, can negatively impact students' mental health.

When students experience good mental well-being, they are better equipped to focus, concentrate, and learn effectively. Therefore, it is crucial to create mental health awareness and foster a supportive environment to cultivate awareness among students:

1. **Creating Awareness:** Schools and colleges should make it compulsory to teach about mental health. It can be included in the curriculum through workshops, seminars and presentations to educate students.



2. **Accessible Support System:** Schools can establish counselling services to provide students with a safe space to seek help. Promoting the utilisation of these services and ensuring confidentiality are vital.

3. **Physical Activity:** Encouraging regular physical activity and mindfulness can enhance mood, reduce stress and improve overall well-being.

4. **Breaking the Stigma:** encouraging open conversations about mental health and fostering a supportive culture that emphasises seeking help can help eliminate the stigma associated with it.

Additional measures include stress management programs, creating a safe and healthy environment, fostering positive relationships, implementing regular evaluations and improvements.

Mental health awareness in schools is no nearly an option; it is a necessity. Prioritizing students' mental health is crucial for their academic success, personal growth, and overall well-being. By creating an environment that nurtures mental health, educational institutions, families, and communities empower students to thrive both academically and emotionally. We should recognise the importance of mental health awareness in schools and work towards creating a mentally healthy and thriving educational environment.

Clothes Through the Eyes of an Athlete Student in a Private School.

Kayla Marion

Intern, Affinity Patient Advocacy



Let's talk about self impressions for a moment.

When you picture yourself, what do you see? An idealistic version of yourself, or a haunting image? There are so many ways people can look at themselves, and it's important to consider that people will usually see a flaw, whether it's actually a flaw, or not.

As a student athlete, specifically a swimmer (for this example), the insecurity can be real. After all, the kid next to you is slipping into a size 18 racing suit while you struggle to get your own suit over your thighs. When that kid is done she might even tell her friends quite loudly what she just did with relative ease, making you look at your red face in the mirror as you now try to get your own swimsuit over your legs.

As a Catholic school student, everyone's wearing the same outfit, or you would think. Unfortunately, people create differences where there are none. Since the only difference to create in a Catholic school is skirt size, kids make little judgements on whose skirt is shorter and how small the skirt waistband can be. Some kids might say your skirt is too long, because that's not cool. Then, when you roll it up they might say it's too short because now they can see your thighs rubbing together. You get fitted for skirts at the store and one of the kids you know asks what size you're getting for next year, and of course, the first thing they reveal is that they're a smaller size. This will be the height of conversation on the first entire week of school, as everyone small reveals their size, leaving you to question why your skirt is bigger.

This might not be everyone's experience, but if it is, I have some good news. The size of her clothes (or his, if you're a guy) has nothing to do with *your* clothes, *your* accomplishments, or *your* worth. They bought an article of clothing that works for them. But everyone's different. Her clothes weren't bought to fit you. They were bought to fit her. You bought your own clothes to fit you, right? And, in the end, think of the amazing things you've done without needing to wear that other suit/skirt, the smaller one, the "better" one (as many people consider it). It can be hard to think, but your "flaw" probably isn't a flaw at all. In fact, it's part of your story. It's woven into the work you put in to get where you are.

So, where have you gotten yourself with how you are right now. You've worked so hard and sure, you might not be the skinniest on the team, or at school, or in the changing rooms. But you're you, and that's the best part. What got you to this meet, prepared you for the race, swam all those yards in practices - what got you into this school, and sat through the studying, and worked through the test taking, is getting dressed for whatever you're about to do. So rock it, because your suit size and skirt size is not a full reflection of who you are and how hard you've worked. Period.



NAVIGATING THROUGH THE STORM

Bhavya Jain

Intern, Affinity Patient Advocacy

The State of Mental Health Among the Working Population in the Post-Covid Era

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

The World Health Organization defines mental health as a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. Poor mental health can manifest in forms like anxiety, panic attacks, eating disorders, etc., which disturb the routine of the individual suffering from it and have recently occupied the center space of various publications across all print, broadcast, and new media, i.e., the internet since the pandemic.

COVID IN INDIA AND ITS IMPACT

The first case of COVID-19 was reported on 30th January 2020 in India, and as a precaution, the central government issued guidelines regarding social distancing and regular sanitization. In India, a full-fledged lockdown was instructed in the month of April. Since people weren't habitual of such situations, and it all happened in a jiffy, the situation took a toll on their mental health because "an idle mind is the devil's workshop."

This time gave us the golden opportunity to spend time with our families, which seemed impossible considering professional life, but soon it grew gruesome. People who were the only bread-winners of their families had a total breakdown when the savings were flowing like water. Since we have people belonging to every strata of society, those belonging to the lower-income segment suffered the most considering the hand-to-mouth diversion of their earnings.

Those who fall in the middle segment still managed, but many had their heads wrapped around the alimony. "Many were diagnosed with depression and related conditions, leading to increased overthinking and disrupted brain activity. I speak from personal experience."

COPING MECHANISMS IN THE NEW NORMAL

To cope with the lost time and money, the idea of working remotely suited best not only in India but the entire world. Most importantly, social media saw a huge transformation, with people vocalizing their experiences to uplift one another. Many individuals, especially home bakers in my vicinity, generated small business ideas to keep themselves engrossed.

In conclusion, all of us emerged victorious and are still adapting to the new normal, but as Mr. Aman Gupta, Co-founder BoAt, said on Shark Tank India, Season 2, "You are down but not out, my friend." I sought his advice, and it did help to a great extent, and I strongly believe one should remember that the Lord gives the hardest battles to his strongest soldiers.



Subject Recruitment for Clinical Studies with Affinity Patient Advocacy

Affinity Patient Advocacy is here to elevate subject recruitment and retention to benefit everyone involved, from subjects to sponsors, with a deep and thorough understanding of therapeutic areas.

Due to our expertise in multiple therapeutic areas, due to advocating for these patients, Affinity Patient Advocacy is proud to assist biotechnology companies, pharmaceutical companies, clinical trial sites, device, and nutraceutical companies with clinical trial recruitment services. We believe in elevating subject recruitment and retention through expertise in patient care, education, and clinical research services customized to our clients' needs. Originally, Affinity Patient Advocacy was established to help oncology patients since our CEO, Christina DiArcangelo had lost her father, Albert J. DiArcangelo, Sr. at age 62 from multiple forms of cancer. However, when Christina started working in medical cannabis clinical research, patients started requesting help from multiple therapeutic areas.



Affinity Patient Advocacy understands patients explicitly. They talk to them daily before they enter clinical studies. Affinity Patient Advocacy already helps patients find clinical studies for them to potentially consider.

Therefore, Affinity Patient Advocacy is the leading expert in patient care, education, services, and clinical research. Affinity Patient Advocacy's sister organizations, Affinity Bio Partners (global clinical research organization) and Spectral Analytics Precision Tele-Monitoring (Artificial Intelligence Bots, Tele-monitoring software, and electronic capture system as well as electronic patient reported outcomes) has the strength of partnering with a true global clinical research organization to help with educational materials, regulatory compliance and the artificial intelligence technology can find, retain, and document all correspondence in a compliant manner. The pre-screening of potential subjects is done within the technology which provides our clients with piece of mind.

Affinity Patient Advocacy is one of a kind! We believe in the concierge approach for all of our patients that we support, subjects that may enter into a clinical study that we are working on and with all of our clients.

Affinity Patient Advocacy is here to make our client's lives easier.

- Each study is customized to our clients' needs.
- Each subject that is pre-screened is fully educated and we ensure to take the necessary time to help the subjects feel safe and secure.
- Each subject is pre-screened through Spectral Analytics Precision Tele-Monitoring (we do not have any utilization of excel tracking spreadsheets or survey programs that are not regulated).
- Each study can have the AI Bots deployed to interact with potential subjects prior to pre-screening.
- Each study can have the AI Bots kept active during the study to communicate with the subjects once enrolled in the study for subject retention.
- Each study can also utilize our back-end technology Bots to help find subjects that are needed to enroll in the study.
- Each study will have full reporting and metrics that are shared with our clients.



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The New Website

www.affinitypatientadvocacy.org

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Christina DiArcangelo
Chief Executive Officer, APA

"I'm so very excited for our new website at Affinity Patient Advocacy. This website in my opinion is one of the best websites we've had since I started the company back in twenty fifteen. Please take a look today at our newest website at www.affinitypatientadvocacy.org Thank you so much"

The work I do with affinity patient advocacy is so fulfilling. It allows me to continue working with patients, getting them what they need. I have built my entire career and my activism platform on patient awareness, advocacy, health and well-being. I'm so honoured to be a part of this very hardworking board.



Tiffany Watkins
Vice President, APA

I'm Melisa Frain and I am the Secretary board member of affinity patient advocacy. I think the new APA website is so much more personal, has more heart and is inviting. It will reach so many people in need. It is easy to use and understand. It really shows who APA is and they are here to help and they care.



Melisa Frain
Secretary, APA



Hello, this is Nitika Dargan, working with affinity patient advocacy. As a board member we are delighted to announce that we have launched a new website. This website is more patient centric and helps patients in every way possible. Christina DiArcangelo our CEO aimed to create affinity patient advocacy to help all our patients as for us patients comes first.

Importance of Donation



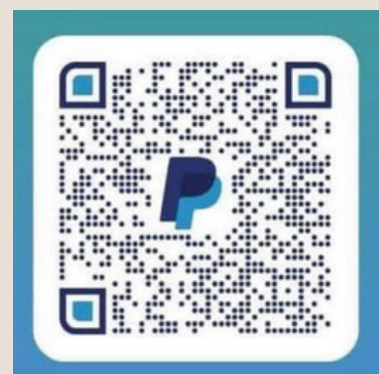
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