

# What MJSHS Students Are Saying About Mental Health

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"The worst part about mental illness is doubting you have it. Yes, I have been diagnosed. But every so often I worry that maybe I am "doing all of this for attention" or "it's all in [my] head" because that's what people keep telling me. Pay attention to the message you're conveying."

"Denying illness is the worst thing a loved one can do to someone suffering with mental illness. Let us vow to take everything and everyone seriously from now on."

"For six months straight, my friend cried every night. When she finally brought up the courage to tell her mom, her mom didn't believe her and said that she was exaggerating."



"There are millions of people who suffer from depressions worldwide, and their stories, are rarely, if ever, heard, especially those among communities in which mental disabilities are perceived as a weakness or the worst kind of social stigmas, such as Mission. Depression exists in every class, race, and area. Our school is no exception. Awareness is on the beginning."

"To this day, I'm still afraid to share with everyone that I'm suffering with anxiety, which also comes with depression. I guess the reason why I'm afraid to share this is because of the stigma around mental-illness. People often think that those who are mentally ill just have to change their mindsets. The thing is, mental illness is something you can't control. You can't help the way you feel or think. What sucks is that I'm influenced by this stigma as well- I contribute to it by being too scared to raise awareness and share. I'm afraid that if I do share, people will either make light of the situation and not care at all or treat me as if I were a completely different person who needs help."



## **Take an ACTIVE role to prevent youth violence and protect child health and safety.**

*A tip sheet for parents, relatives, teachers, coaches, and other concerned community adults to identify serious concerns for their children.*

Can you identify the signs and symptoms of emotional problems in children and teens? How do you tell the difference between a normal childhood mood swing and the early signs of potential mental disorder? Each individual situation varies – but here are some helpful general guidelines.

**Positive parental time and attention is the most important protection. Make time to have regular, meaningful conversations with your child. Ask about his or her daily life and feelings, and really LISTEN!**

### **When Should YOU Take Action?**

Some situations are very serious and should be acted upon immediately:

- Bringing weapons to school
- Threats or acts of violence (against pets, people)
- Obsession with, or interest in, weapons or violent acts
- Self-harm (cutting, burning, bruising)
- Talking or thinking of suicide
- Being hurt or victimized by others
- Illegal actions
- Running away from home
- Use of alcohol or drugs
- Delusions or hallucinations

Seek help if you notice changes in your child's behavior, or symptoms of distress that last more than two weeks:

- Lying or stealing
- Increased truancy
- Decrease in school grades
- Isolating from friends and family
- Irritability, anger
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Conflict with peers and friends
- Sleep problems or fatigue
- Low self esteem
- Frequent headaches, stomach problems
- Poor or excessive appetite
- Crying spells
- Excessive worrying and fears
- Hopelessness
- Poor concentration

**Err on the side of caution. If something feels wrong, take action!**