



Message of the Month

August 2015

www.kanecountymentalhealth.org

Kane County Mental Health Council

- The Association for Individual Development 630-966-4000
- Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center 630-859-6562
- Delnor Community Hospital 630-208-3000
- Ecker Center for Mental Health Services 847-695-0484
- Family Counseling Service of Aurora 630-844-2662
- Family Service Association of Greater Elgin Area 847-695-3680
- Gateway Foundation/Aurora 630-966-7400
- Greater Elgin Family Care Center 847-608-1344
- Kane County Health Department 630-208-3801
- Larkin Center 847-695-5656
- League of Women Voters 630-365-2138
- INC Board 630-892-5456
- National Alliance on Mental Illness, DeKalb, Kane-South, Kendall Counties, Inc. 630-896-6264
- National Alliance on Mental Illness-Kane County 847-931-4715
- Presence Mercy Medical Center 630-801-2657
- Presence St. Joseph Hospital 847-931-5521
- Senior Services Association 847-741-0404
- Suicide Prevention Services 630-482-9696
- TriCity Family Services 630-232-1070
- VNA Health Care 630-978-9835

Combatting those Back-to-School fears

The month of August means summer is coming to a close and kids are heading back to school. The thoughts of going back to school can create anxiety and stress in youth. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, school refusal is defined as "the disorder of a child who refuses to go to school on a regular basis or has problems staying in school." Physical symptoms could include headaches, stomachaches, or nausea, as well as tantrums, inflexibility, separation anxiety, defiance, excessive absences, change in grades/academic functioning, or a change in attitudes and behaviors. All kids are different but often school refusal is related to starting school, moving, or other stressful events. The student may have a fear of failure in school, fear of other students, or be afraid that something will happen to their parent/loved one while they are away at school. Discuss school with them to allow them to talk about their feelings and fears. Also, talk positively about school in your household. Share your own fun stories and things you found to be beneficial from school. During the two to three weeks prior to school starting, get the student back in a school routine. Adequate sleep, nutrition, and exercise are natural ways to combat anxiety. Help the student to understand what their school schedule will look like before, during, and after the school day. Encourage the youth to participate in extra-curricular activities before, during, or after school. Maintain communication with the child's teacher and school to ensure the situation is known and addressed. In order to determine what underlying issues exist, it may be necessary for the youth to see a mental health professional who can identify the reasons behind the school refusal and help determine what type of treatment will be best. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to expose the student to school in small amounts and then increase over time. School can be a frightening experience for kids, but with proper planning, those fears can be reduced to help the child feel successful.

Nicole Droy, Bernadette May, LCSW

Family Service Association of Greater Elgin Area

Info Box: [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#); [Child Mind Institute](#); [Harvard Health Publications](#)