

MACOMB DAILY

Chippewa Valley Coalition hosts teen stress seminar



In 2014, parents and teens worked in groups on topics selected by the Chippewa Valley High School Coalition Teen Council. The teen council is part of Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families. Nicole Tuttle--For The Macomb Daily

By Nicole Tuttle, For The Macomb Daily

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Chippewa Valley High School teens and teens who are a part of the Chippewa Valley High School Coalition Teen Council participated in a 2014 family night. Nicole Tuttle--For The Macomb Daily

The teenage years aren't exactly wonder years in 2015.

In fact, an American Psychological Association survey shows during the school year, teens experience higher stress levels than adults, according to Chippewa Valley High School Student Assistance Specialist Betty DeLaere.

The survey also found that 31 percent of teens reported feeling overwhelmed and 30 percent reported depression due to stress.

“Thirty-six percent said they were fatigued,” DeLaere said.

On Oct. 22, Chippewa Valley High School Student Assistance, the CVHS Coalition Teen Council and the Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families will host a family night.

From 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. parents and students will gather at Chippewa Valley High School’s media center to discuss understanding and handling teen stress. Parking will be in the north lot and the C doors of the building will be open. A complimentary pizza dinner is offered.

Family night events generally include a short presentation and then division of participants into several smaller groups for discussion. Families are encouraged to split up at different tables to gain new perspectives.

In addition to her position as a student assistance specialist at Chippewa Valley High School, DeLaere serves as an advisor to Chippewa Valley High School’s Coalition Teen Council. The council is part of the larger Chippewa Valley Coalition for Youth and Families. At Chippewa Valley High School, the group consists of between 50 and 60 students.

The group often chooses the topics for family night discussions, as well planning and facilitating the events. The group overwhelmingly declared the need to host a discussion on teen stress, according to DeLaere.

“What we hope to do is bring awareness to the amount of stress these kids are under...” DeLaere said.

Students often do not understand how their chronic stress can affect them physically and psychologically, according to DeLaere.

“Their brains are still forming, and chronic stress releases neurotransmitter chemicals in the brain that affect how the brain is formed. It can set them up for future anxiety and depressive disorders in adult life,” she said.

Social media and the Internet have created additional stress for teens rather than making their lives easier, due to lack of privacy and future job ramifications, according to DeLaere

“They are connected 24/7 online. They never have time off. Teens used to go home and shut the door and get away. Now they never get away from it. Social media is stressful,” DeLaere said.

Teens frequently do not get enough exercise due to stress, and parents do not always model healthy stress reduction, DeLaere said.

The goal of the family night is to not only recognize teen stress, but offer methods of coping including teaching parents to handle their own stress so they may become better models.

“Kids who are stressed out and do not know how to cope can go to negatives, use drugs and alcohol to help them calm down...” DeLaere said.

Space is limited and an RSVP is required. Registration is available at surveyMonkey.com/r/KK72GHG, by contacting bdelaere@cvs.k12.mi.us or by phone at 586-723-2561.