

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sound bites are available at: www.dhhs.ne.gov/audio

Questions for Parents May is Children's Mental Health Awareness Month

Lincoln—Does your child often seem sad, tired, restless or out of sorts? Does he or she spend a lot of time alone? Have low self-esteem? Have trouble getting along with family and friends?

Approximately one out of five adolescents has a diagnosable mental health disorder, and one in four shows at least mild symptoms of depression. Of Nebraska high school students, 21 percent reported feeling sad or hopeless during the past 12 months in a survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Parents often struggle to find out if something is wrong in their child's life," said Scot L. Adams, director of the Division of Behavioral Health at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. "Depression in kids may show up as a lack of concentration or losing interest in things they used to like."

For 12 questions every parent should ask, go to: <http://1.usa.gov/110rsud>

The questions include: Does my child....

- Have frequent outbursts of shouting, complaining or crying?
- Have trouble performing or behaving in school?
- Show sudden changes in eating patterns?
- Seem to have lost interest in hobbies like music or sports?
- Talk about death or suicide?

The Nebraska Family Helpline at 1-888-866-8660 can connect families to the help they need when dealing with their children's behavioral problems and mental health issues. At the Helpline, operators will assess immediate safety needs, identify the potential level of a behavioral health crisis and/or make recommendations or referrals.

For other resources, go to the Nebraska Network of Care at: <http://1.usa.gov/OtdSMb>

Approximately 15 million young people in the United States have a diagnosable mental or emotional health disorder, but studies report that as many as 80 percent never receive treatment.*

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*American Psychiatric Association

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