

Shifting From High School to College

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At a recent mental health educational event at the University of Akron, Dr. Jerald Kay, MD from Wright State University School of Medicine reported that suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death in college-age students. Everyone feels overwhelmed by difficult emotions or situations sometimes but young people may struggle to put

their problems in perspective and ask an adult for help.

Students who are transitioning from high school to college may experience many things during this exciting period; however it can be a stressful time for both the student and the families.

Parents who have cared for their child's health and managed many areas of their life can be worried as they leave their structured and supportive homes.

When away, the young adults and parents may find it difficult to catch the early developing symptoms of their illness, monitor medication side-effects or communicate openly with medical professionals. The students themselves may be unprepared for the pressures and stresses of college life.

An increasing number of college students are living on campus having been diagnosed with a mental illness. In a 2005 national survey of the directors of college counseling centers, 95 percent of counseling directors reported an increase in students who were already on psychiatric medications when they came in for help. While universities debate with how to serve the growing number of students with mental disorders, students are taking the initiative

Portage Path Behavioral Health's SUPPORT Hotline

Call 330-434-9144 or 1-800-273-TALK
for 24-hour assistance.

The Summit County Suicide Prevention Coalition

preventsuicide@adm.org

by helping one another.

Peer support programs like Active Minds (www.active-minds.org) and NAMI on Campus (www.NAMI.org) focus on helping students understand mental illness while surrounding them in positive and engaging support systems.

One of the most important tips for success is to help your student learn about and get local health support on or near campus. Talk to the campus counselors and health center to discuss the best op-

tions for your student. Counselors and therapists can provide emotional support and can help students build their own coping skills for dealing with problems. Once the foundation is set for a healthy lifestyle and support system, students will learn to manage their illnesses in college and into adulthood.

Students and parents both need to know that help is only a phone call away from anywhere in the country at 1-800-273-TALK.

