Parents Forum, Focus on Mental Health

November 12, 2014

Parents should be observant and watch for signs that may show your son or daughter requires assistance.

Warning signs someone may need help

Change in Mindset

- Negative attitude and mindset
- Sudden and pervasive change in behavior
- Sudden changes in mood and extreme emotionality including irritability, anger, sadness and pervasive crying
- Poor Hygiene

Difficulty with School/Concentration

- Difficulty completing tasks and homework
- Drop in grades
- Inability to concentrate
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities, in school and social interaction
- Missing classes

Lack of Sleep or Energy

- Sleeping too much or too little
- Excessive tiredness
- Low energy
- Lack of motivation

Unhealthy Change in Eating Behavior

- Lack of appetite
- Pronounced weight loss or weight gain
- Food restriction sometimes accompanied by vomiting

Isolation, Thoughts of Suicide, Alcohol or Drug Abuse

- Social Isolation
- Excessive drinking or drug use
- Expression of hopelessness or suicidal thoughts
- A specific plan for suicide
- Evidence of cutting

What can you do?

- Let them know you care and are there for them
- Listen
- Create an environment that promotes open dialogue and communication
- Talk openly about getting help—remove the stigma surrounding mental health issues
- Encourage students to talk to someone who can help (Professor, RA, Coach, Dean, Advisor, Doctor, etc.)
- Provide resources
  - Office of Student Affairs / Dean of Students
  - Training Institute for Mental Health / Beth Israel
  - Therapy versus Psychiatry