

## Confronting Bullying as a Parent

AVON, Conn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- More than 5.7 million young people are involved in bullying, either by being bullied or acting as the bully themselves, according to The National Youth Violence Prevention Network. Parents can help their children and teenagers by knowing the warning signs that their child is being bullied or bullying others, how to talk about this issue and how much influence parents have.

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month and Magellan Health Services is calling attention to mental health and bullying for its second annual [Take Mental Health To Heart](#) campaign. Magellan has partnered with The Jed Foundation, the nation's leading organization working to promote emotional health and prevent suicide among college students and young adults, to raise awareness about the mental health effects of bullying and encourage people to take responsibility for building a bully-free community. Throughout the month, Magellan and The Jed Foundation will share information about bullying from the perspective of the victim, the bully, parents and bystanders.

### Talking About Bullying

Children learn early—from television, books and magazines, music, the Internet and interactions with their peers and family—how to treat and respect other people. Parents are the most powerful role models, and their actions mold a child's attitudes about many things, including acceptable social behavior. When talking to children about bullying, parents must be as open and honest as possible, carefully listening to them and acknowledging that they understand the youth's feelings. Parents should also watch for signs that a child may be the victim of bullying, may be bullying others, or may be disturbed by having witnessed a bullying incident.

"Whether a child is being bullied or is bullying others, either is a clear sign that something is wrong," says Gary Henschen, M.D., chief medical officer for behavioral health at Magellan. "Children and young adults respond to bullying differently, so any significant changes in behavior — from acting out and being disruptive, to becoming more reserved or isolated — may be a sign that bullying is at work."

Signs that a child is being bullied at school may include:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books and electronics
- Frequent headaches or stomachaches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, such as suddenly skipping meals or binge eating
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors, such as running away from home, harming themselves or talking about suicide

Signs that a child may be bullying others include:

- Physical or verbal fights
- Having friends who bully others
- Increasingly aggressive behavior
- Frequent reprimands, such as being sent to the principal's office or to detention
- Having unexplained money or new belongings
- Blaming others for their problems

"As they age and become more independent, youth also become clever at concealing the fact that something is bothering them," said Victor Schwartz, M.D., medical director for The Jed Foundation. "It's important to have a regular open dialogue, be watchful for unexplained behavior changes and continue to model good problem-solving behaviors."

### "Planting the Seed" to Stop Bullying

On [www.TakeMentalHealthToHeart.com](http://www.TakeMentalHealthToHeart.com), visitors can learn more about how bullying impacts the victim, bystanders and the bully; find helpful information for parents; take a screener for depression; and discover a variety of other links and resources. Visitors are also encouraged to leave a comment by "planting a virtual seed" on the website that they can share with friends and family to raise awareness about the impact of bullying. As individuals share their pledge to end bullying with others, their virtual seed will grow into a "tree" representing the expansive network of people they have reached with their message. For every virtual seed planted during the month of May, Magellan will donate \$5 to The Jed Foundation, up to \$25,000.

To learn more about bullying and the *Take Mental Health To Heart Campaign*, visit [www.TakeMentalHealthToHeart.com](http://www.TakeMentalHealthToHeart.com).

About The Jed Foundation: The Jed Foundation (TJF) is the nation's leading organization working to promote emotional health and prevent suicide among college students. TJF materials and tools are available to all colleges and universities throughout the United States. Founded in 2000 by parents who lost a son to suicide while he was attending college, the organization has developed several programs, which include: ULifeline, an online resource that gives students access to campus-specific resources and allows them to take an anonymous emotional health screening; the Peabody Award-winning Half of Us campaign with mtvU, which uses online, on-air and on campus programming to decrease stigma around mental illness and encourage help-seeking; Love is Louder, a movement online and in communities to build connectedness and increase resiliency; and a portfolio of nationally-recognized tools, resources and training programs that help campuses effectively promote mental health and protect at-risk students. Learn more by visiting [www.jedfoundation.org](http://www.jedfoundation.org), [www.ulifeline.org](http://www.ulifeline.org), [www.halfofus.com](http://www.halfofus.com), or [www.loveislouder.com](http://www.loveislouder.com).

About Magellan Health Services: Headquartered in Avon, Conn., Magellan Health Services Inc. is a leading specialty health care management organization with expertise in managing behavioral health, radiology and specialty pharmaceuticals, as well as public sector pharmacy benefits programs. Magellan delivers innovative solutions to improve quality outcomes and optimize the cost of care for those we serve. As of March 31, 2012, Magellan's customers include health plans, employers and government agencies, serving approximately 33.8 million members in our behavioral health business, 16.1 million members in our radiology benefits management segment, and 6.2 million members in our medical pharmacy management product. In addition, the specialty pharmaceutical segment served 41 health plans and several pharmaceutical manufacturers and state Medicaid programs. The company's Medicaid Administration segment served 24 states and the District of Columbia. For more information, visit [www.MagellanHealth.com](http://www.MagellanHealth.com).

Photos/Multimedia Gallery Available: <http://www.businesswire.com/cgi-bin/mmg.cgi?eid=50278738&lang=en>

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