

Did You Know?

FOSTER CARE AND MENTAL ILLNESS ARE RELATED

The month of May is recognized as both Foster Care Awareness Month and Mental Health Awareness Month. While these are separate national campaigns, at CASA we see them as interrelated topics that are very important to our work advocating for children.



Up to 80% of youth living in foster care have mental health issues, compared to about 20% of children and teens in general.

5x

Individuals who spent time in foster care as a child are five times more likely to experience PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) as an adult.



Psychotropic medications are prescribed to youth in foster care at a much higher rate (up to 52%) than children and teens in the general population (4%).

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/awareness/facts/>

It's no wonder that the American Academy of Pediatrics highlights mental and behavioral health as the "greatest unmet health need for children and teens in foster care."

CASA volunteers advocate for a child's mental well-being, in addition to their physical safety. It is imperative that we connect children with the mental health supports they need to succeed.

Layla's Story

Layla and her siblings faced many transitions when their family immigrated to the United States. On the outside, they looked like a successful, well-adjusted family. Unfortunately, their home life was actually a turbulent mix of mental illness, emotional abuse, and domestic violence.

It was determined that Layla's father was encouraging her to engage in self-harm, so the siblings were placed in foster care. They were appointed a CASA volunteer who knew it was in their best interests to work towards a longer-term solution.

Layla's CASA volunteer helped make a plan for a safe and healthy reunion with the siblings' birth mother. Prior to reunification, the siblings connected with vital trauma-informed supports and received therapy to help process their feelings.

CASA prioritized the mental health care of Layla, her siblings, and their birth mother while advocating for reunification.

July 2022 - March 2023 UPDATE



279 CHILDREN SERVED BY HENRICO CASA
SINCE JULY 2022

65%

HAVE MENTAL
HEALTH CONCERNS

81%

HAVE SOMEONE WITH
MENTAL ILLNESS
LIVING IN THE HOME

46

WERE IN CUSTODY
OF THE DEPARTMENT
OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Mental health challenges are overwhelming and can be debilitating. To proactively address stress and anxiety, incorporate calming activities into your day-to-day routine.

One example is the 4-7-8 breathing technique. It is known to reduce anxiety and help with sleeplessness.

4 Breathe in for four seconds...

7 Hold the breathe for seven seconds...

8 Breathe out for eight seconds. Repeat.

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