

WHERE THE BOOKLET CAME FROM

TRIDENT UNITED WAY TEENLINE is a free, confidential telephone help line for Tri-County middle and high school students. The high school student volunteers who answer the calls are carefully screened and trained. They don't judge or give advice. Their job is to listen and help you talk things out, look at options, and give you information about other resources when needed. No problem is too big, too small, too bad, or too shocking for the TEENLINE volunteers. When you call TEENLINE, you don't even have to give your name or worry that others will find you that you called or what you talked about. Everything is PRIVATE and FREE!

TEENLINE hours are weekdays 4:00pm – 8:00pm. When TEENLINE is closed, the trained adult volunteers at 2-1-1 Hotline (the 24-hour free, confidential help line) will listen and offer you the same help that TEENLINE offers.

TEENLINE (free, confidential help)

747-TEEN (8336) or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

2-1-1 HOTLINE (free, confidential help 24-hours a day)

2-1-1 if for some reason this number doesn't work try

744-HELP (4357) or 1-800-922-2283

MAYOR'S COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES was created to enhance the health, safety, and education of Charleston's children, youth and families. The Commission is made-up of volunteers from the community who have a genuine interest in the welfare of the community. They are there to help identify and meet the needs of the people in Charleston and serve as a clearinghouse of information about resources available for children, youth and families.

MAYOR'S COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

965-4037

Trident United Way's
TEENLINE

YOUTH YELLOW PAGES
A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR YOUTH

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TEENLINE

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USING THE YOUTH YELLOW PAGES

Life can be stressful. The Youth Yellow Pages is a resource guide written specifically for students. It covers some of the problems and situations that students may face and lists agencies that can help. Unfortunately, we could not include all the concerns or all the helpful agencies but keep in mind, TeenLine can talk about any problem and give you information about other services not listed.

The book is divided by subjects. The TABLE OF CONTENTS lists these topics alphabetically. If you have a question or need more information, call the agencies listed or call TeenLine. If a number is busy, be patient and keep trying. If a number has been disconnected, look it up in the phone book, or call TeenLine. Don't give up!

TIPS WHEN CALLING AN AGENCY:

Have paper and pencil ready to write down the information. Identify yourself as a youth and ask if the conversation is confidential, if that is important to you. It will also help you to ask the following questions:

- What county do you serve?
- Who can receive your services?
- What is the cost of your service? Not all resources are free like TeenLine!
- What are your hours?
- Where are you located?
- What documents do I need? What do I need to bring with me?
- Do I need permission from a parent or legal guardian?
- Are your services confidential?

Before hanging up, make sure you have the following information:

- Name of agency and the person you spoke to
- Date and time of call
- The steps/advice suggested to handle your situation

We hope that the Youth Yellow Pages will help you help yourself or someone you know and make you more aware of local resources that can offer information and services you need.

The Tri-County has many different agencies. However, there may not be a program that you feel meets your needs. Know that talking about your situation helps. Many people in your life can and will listen and be helpful to you: parents, family members, family friends, guidance counselors, teachers, religious leaders and friends. TeenLine is always available to listen and to help, no matter what's going on.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Emergency Ambulance, Fire or Police.....	911
CrimeStoppers (to report information on a crime).....	554-1111, 1-800-452-1111
Department of Social Services, DSS (to report abuse or suspected abuse)	
Berkeley County.....	723-0723, 719-1000
Charleston County.....	953-9400
Dorchester County.....	821-0444
Hotline (Tri-County 24-hour hotline).....	211
From cell phone	744-4357 or 1-800-922-2283
People Against Rape, PAR (rape crisis line).....	745-0144, 1-800-241-RAPE
Poison Control Center (drug and poison information).....	1-800-922-1117
TeenLine (youth hotline).....	747-8336 or 1-800-273-8255
Hospitals:	
Bon Secours - St Francis.....	402-1000
Roper- St. Francis	724-2000
Roper Berkeley.....	899-7700
Charleston Memorial.....	577-0600
Palmetto Low Country.....	747-5830
East Cooper Medical Center.....	881-0100
Medical University.....	792-2300
Summerville Medical Center.....	832-5000
Trident Medical Center.....	797-7000
Moncks Corner Medical Center.....	761-8721

ALCOHOL/DRUGS

To use or not to use...it's a choice everyone faces over and over again. You have to make your own decision and you can always change your mind. Know the facts!

- * You are more at risk to have problems with drugs/alcohol if other family members have ever had a problem.
- * Pressure to use can come from many sources; it's not a reason to use.
- * Drugs are very unpredictable. Their effects differ from person to person.
- * Know the risks before you decide to use. Ask yourself, "Is it worth it?"
(See section on "Making Choices".)
- * Alcohol/drug experimentation or use has serious consequences:

- overdose: coma, pass out, irregular heart rate, shallow breath, vomiting.
- physical illness
- accidents and injuries
- risk of using impure or unknown drugs
- addiction and dependency
- legal problems - arrest, loss of license, etc.
- problems with family, friends, school, etc.
- **AIDS** (if sharing needles or risky sexual behavior is involved)
- death

* **ACID** (Dots, LSD, Big D) causes hallucinations/illusions (tripping), which can be terrifying. User can suffer from tremors, increased heart rate, panic, confusion, loss of control and flashbacks long after drug use has stopped.

* **COCAINE** is a highly addictive, extremely dangerous drug, which changes your brain chemistry causing possible brain damage, seizures, strokes, heart attacks, violent outbursts and possible death due to heart or lung failure.

* **CRACK** (rock) is a smokable form of cocaine that is extremely dangerous and addictive. It moves quickly to the brain and lungs, causing a sudden and intense high. The high is short and leaves the user craving more.

* **ECSTASY** (X, rolls, E) is a stimulant used to create a false sense of euphoria which fades leaving the user craving more of the drug to repeat their experience. Use of ecstasy can cause depression, vomiting, dizziness, twitching, and facial ticks.

* **GHB** (Liquid E, Liquid X, Blue Verve) is a depressant with effects ranging from lowered inhibitions to nausea. Even small amounts of this drug can lead to overdosing causing unconsciousness, coma, and death. Mixing this drug with alcohol significantly increases risk of overdose and death.

* **HEROIN** (smack, dope, H, junk) is a highly addictive narcotic with severe physical withdrawal symptoms. Because it is a street drug, not a pharmaceutical, the user never knows how pure it is. This makes all methods of heroin use extremely dangerous and potentially deadly.

* **INHALANTS** (sniffing, huffing) cause the most amount of bodily damage when compared to all other drugs. Because inhalants rapidly enter the bloodstream through the lungs they can be extremely deadly. You could hurt or kill yourself with only one use.

* **KETAMINE** (K, Special K, Lady K) was historically used by veterinarians to tranquilize animals such as horses. Ketamine can cause blackouts and complete dissociation and can easily become psychologically addictive.

* **MARIJUANA** (pot, reefer, weed, dope) affects memory and interferes with thinking and coordination. It destroys the body's white blood cells, which help fight infections. Pot is psychologically addictive, making it hard to quit.

* **NICOTINE** is a very addictive drug found in cigarettes, chewing tobacco, snuff, etc. It's one of the hardest drugs to quit. It causes diseases and cancer of the lungs, mouth, throat and stomach. **IT'S DEADLY.**

* **PRESCRIPTION DRUGS** (Ritalin, anti-depressants, etc.) are dangerous when you use someone else's or use them incorrectly. Drugs react differently in every person and can be deadly.

* **FATAL FACTS:** 1) Accidents due to drinking and driving are a leading cause of death among teens. Never drink and drive or ride with someone who has been drinking.
2) Games that involve drinking large amounts in a short time can give you alcohol poisoning and **CAN KILL YOU.**
3) Mixing alcohol with downers or other drugs is very dangerous. Combinations **CAN KILL YOU.**

* **FACT:** Not everyone uses alcohol/drugs.

* Using to escape, relieve or avoid stress doesn't make problems go away. In fact, this creates more problems.

* **ALCOHOL** can increase tendencies toward violent or aggressive behavior as well as feelings of depression.

* **IT'S ILLEGAL TO DRINK ALCOHOL IN SOUTH CAROLINA IF YOU'RE UNDER 21 YEARS OLD, and RECREATIONAL DRUG USE IS ALWAYS ILLEGAL!**

People with drug/alcohol problems are often the last to see it. It is helpful to be honest, not pretend there's not a problem, and not let the person deny the problem. The questions below can help you evaluate if there is a problem.

Do you or someone you know:

- Drink/do drugs because of problems? When feeling bad?
- Drink/do drugs when mad at others?
- Drink/do drugs even when you don't mean to or say you're not going to?
- Try not to drink/do drugs and fail?
- Drink/do drugs in the morning? Before or during school or work?
- Find grades or work habits are starting to slip?
- Have blackouts or have times when you don't remember what happened?
- Ever get in trouble because of drinking/drug use?
- Do things you wouldn't normally do because of using alcohol/drugs?
- Need alcohol/drugs to have a good time?
- Lie about drinking/drug use?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you or someone you know may have a problem. It's okay to ask for help if you think you or someone you care about has a problem.

It's scary and difficult to live with someone who is a substance abuser. The abuse can create lack of attention, broken promises, physical, emotional or verbal abuse and general family problems. There's help for those living with a substance abuser as well as help for the person with the problem.

For an alcohol/drug related emergency, get to an emergency room immediately, or call 911.

RESOURCES:

Alateen.....	762-6999
Alcoholics Anonymous.....	723-9633, 554-2998
Narcotics Anonymous.....	852-3001,720-8031, (888) 370-6262
Alcohol and Drug Commission, Dorchester County.....	871-4790
Berkeley Kennedy Center.....	577-9181, 761-8272
Charleston Department of Alcohol and other Drug Abuse Services.....	722-0100
Narcotics Anonymous.....	
Poison/Drug Information Line.....	1-800-922-1117
TeenLine (to talk and to get other numbers).....	747-8336 or 1-800-273-8255
Some hospitals have alcohol/drug treatment facilities.	

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Small children and teens can be victims of child abuse. The abuser is usually someone the victim knows - a family member or another trusted adult. The abuser usually threatens and/or blames the victim in order to make the victim feel guilty and keep quiet. **IT'S NEVER THE VICTIM'S FAULT!**

Child abuse and neglect occur in several ways:

NEGLECT: When parent/guardian fails to provide food, shelter, clothing, education, protection, supervision and/or medical care.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: When the adult(s) regularly uses screaming, put-downs, threats, blaming, harassment, and/or sarcasm as a tool to control or punish.

SEXUAL ABUSE: Sexual abuse can involve:

- * **verbal** When sexual comments are made or a youth is asked to participate in sexual behaviors.
- * **Exposer:** When an adult shows pornography or their genitals (private parts). It may involve watching a naked child for sexual pleasure or taking nude/suggestive pictures of a youth.
- * **Physical/Genital Contact:** This includes touching, rubbing up against or fondling a youth's private parts or having a youth touch the adult's private parts. "Makingout" is a form of sexual abuse.

* **Penetration:** When an adult places anything - a finger, private part, tongue or object - inside a youth's mouth, anal or vaginal opening. (See Sexual Assault/Rape section for more information).

PHYSICAL ABUSE: When any adult physically hurts a youth by burning, choking, kicking, throwing, pushing, shaking, punching, beating, suffocating, confining or restraining, etc.

NO ONE DESERVES TO BE HURT PHYSICALLY OR EMOTIONALLY.

Everybody gets angry sometimes. However, this doesn't give anyone the right to totally lose control and become violent or abusive. Abusers often try to blame others for their behavior, saying things like "you made me so mad I had to hit you." You are NOT responsible for how others handle their anger or stress. You are responsible for your behavior only.

Abuse is scary, but you did not cause it to happen. Keeping it a secret does not help you or anyone; keeping abuse a secret increases the chance that the abuse may continue, getting worse each time.

There might be times when you feel like you're losing control: **get help!** You can learn good ways to deal with stress, tension and anger. (See "Dealing with Conflict and Stress" section.)

Youth deserve and have the right to be safe, to be cared for, to have a safe place to live, medical care, food and clean clothing. **If you suspect a friend is being abused or neglected, or if it's happening to you, get help immediately.**

If you're a victim of abuse or if you are abusive, it's important to talk with someone you trust: parents, a school counselor, a teacher, the school nurse, a doctor, a friend of the family, a clergyperson, or a neighbor. If you don't feel comfortable doing this, call TeenLine.

Your safety and the safety of others is what's important!

RESOURCES:

If in immediate danger, call 911 for assistance.

Child Protective Services (abuse or suspected abuse):

Berkeley County DSS723-0723, 719-1158,761-8044

Charleston County DSS.....953-9400

Dorchester County DSS.....	821-0444
The following can provide supportive services to youth and adults:	
The Exchange Club Parent/Child Resource Center	747-1339
LowCountry Children’s Center.....	723-3600
Child Help USA.....	1-800-422-4453
TeenLine	747-TEEN or 1-800-273-TALK
(to talk or to get additional referral information)	

COMMUNICATION

Good communication (listening and being heard) affects all aspects of your life and is the key to any good relationship. You communicate through your words, tone, body and facial gestures. Many things can make good communication difficult.

COMMON BAD COMMUNICATION HABITS

Attacking - coming on too strong, criticizing, putting other people down just because you disagree or they’re different.

Hinting - making people guess and beating around the bush.

Holding everything in - not saying what you think/feel.

Interrupting - always jumping in when others are talking.

Defensiveness - arguing or being overly sensitive when given constructive criticism or told something you don’t agree with or like.

Me, Me, Me - having the conversation always revolve around you.

Not paying attention - looking around, fidgeting, talking to talking to others when someone is talking to you.

Improving communication skills is possible but takes constant work. Here are some questions to get you thinking about your skills.

- * What words best describe the way you communicate?
- * How would others describe the way you communicate?
- * Are you a good listener?
- * What “bad” communication habits do you have? (Look at above list for ideas.)
- * Can you be clearer? More honest?
- * When you have a problem with someone do you talk to them about it? Do you hint? Do you ignore? Do you talk behind their backs?

TO BE A GOOD LISTENER

- * **FOCUS** on the speaker.
- * **BE AWARE** of your body and facial expressions.
- * **BE OPEN** to different opinions and thoughts.
- * **DON'T ASSUME** you know what they mean. Ask questions to make sure.
- * **WAIT YOUR TURN** to speak - don't interrupt - don't argue or try to talk right away.
- * **BE PATIENT** with yourself and with others - keep trying.

TO BE A BETTER SPEAKER

- * **PICK** a good time and place if you can.
- * **THINK** before you speak - know what is it you want to say (practice).
- * **BE HONEST** - say what you mean.
- * **GET** a grip on your feelings so you don't say or do things you will regret.
- * **DON'T ATTACK** - be clear, open and stick to the facts.
- * **GET** to the point - don't hint or beat around the bush.
- * **WATCH** your tone, body gestures, facial expressions, looks.
- * **BE PATIENT** with yourself and with others - keep trying.

It can be harder to communicate when you're upset. It doesn't help when you're mad to hold it in, pretend you're not mad or talk behind someone's back. If you're hurt or mad, go talk to the person about it. (He said/she said stuff can't be trusted!) The tips above and the "Dealing with Conflict" section can be helpful.

DEALING WITH CONFLICT AND STRESS

- * You won't always agree with everyone. You won't always get your way or have things go the way you planned - that's life!
- * Conflict is upsetting. Don't ignore it. Take care of problems as best and as quickly as you can.
- * At times it's impossible to come to an agreement with someone; it then becomes necessary to compromise or "agree to disagree".
- * Conflict resolution is not about winning or losing. It's about keeping your cool and working things out in the best way for everybody.

"Yes" to any of these could mean you're "stressed". No one can avoid, control, or

eliminate all conflicts and stress in their life. If not dealt with, it can be harmful or even deadly. It's never okay to use violence or abuse to express your anger. If you have a conflict with someone, good communication can help work it out (see "Communication" section).

STEPS FOR WORKING THROUGH STRESS AND CONFLICTS:

+ FIGURE OUT WHAT'S STRESSING YOU OUT:

- * Make a list of the good and bad things in your life that are stressful.
- * Mark the things you have control over or can change. This can give you a start on making a move to lessen your stress.
- * Mark the things you can't control or change (others, the past). Think of what will help you cope with these things better.

+ TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF:

- * Take a break and relax. Hang out or talk with friends, watch a movie, listen to music, read, keep a journal, play video games. Do something YOU like.
- * Take control of your time. Make a schedule, plan your day, take one thing at a time - set realistic goals.
- * Let off steam. Exercise, walk, lift weights, bike, or scream into a pillow.
- * Eat right, get enough sleep, exercise. Give yourself credit for all you do.
- * Branch out. Develop a hobby, join a club, volunteer.
- * Laugh as often as you can. Look for humor in everyday life.

+ GIVE YOURSELF AND OTHERS A BREAK. No one is perfect - everyone makes mistakes. Accept what you can't change or control, such as OTHER people or the past.

+ COOL OFF before you act: take deep breaths, count to 10, walk away. Get in control of yourself!

+ GET HELP FROM A NEUTRAL PARTY if a situation seems potentially dangerous. Guidance counselors, teachers, parents, clergy persons, other adults can help.

+ SPEAK DIRECTLY TO THE SOURCE of the problem. Don't believe "he said/she said".

+ SET UP A PRIVATE PLACE and **TIME TO TALK** if possible. Both sides must agree to work it out.

- + **SET AND GO OVER FAIR RULES:**
 - * One person talks at a time - listen without **INTERRUPTING**.
 - * No name calling, blaming, yelling or threatening.
 - * No physical touching, pushing, bumping, spitting, etc.

- + **IDENTIFY and TALK ABOUT THE PROBLEM(S):**
 - * Be specific - talk facts and the present (not past problems).
 - * Be open to what part you played in the conflict.
 - * Repeat each other's complaints to make sure both understand.

- + **IDENTIFY AND TALK ABOUT HOW THE SITUATION MAKES YOU FEEL.**

- + **IDENTIFY all POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR SOLUTION:**
 - * Each person says what they want to happen. Discuss the pros and cons of each.
 - * Repeat each other's suggestions to make sure both understand.

- + **COMPROMISE ON SOLUTIONS:**
 - * Each person asks, "Is there anything I'm willing to give in on? What am I not willing to budge on?"
 - * Both sides may need to give in a little.
 - Come up with what is fair for both sides.

- + **AGREE TO DISAGREE:**
 - * Not all problems have solutions that can be agreed upon.
 - * It may just help to talk about it.
 - * It may end with "We see things differently. I'll respect how you feel and hope you respect my view."
 - * Get outside help if needed - TeenLine, parent, counselor, teacher, clergy, etc.

The key to resolving an issue or handling stress is to talk about the situation, your feelings and what can be done to make it better without hurting anyone in the process. One person may not be willing to talk, or there may be no solution that suits everyone. In these cases, you may have to decide that not being friends or staying away from one another is the only solution. Find out what works for all involved, so you can improve and prevent the situation from happening again.

Remember you can only do the best that you can do. Breathe. Take it one day or one minute at a time. It never works to try to handle everything at once.

Peer mediators, peer counselors, TeenLine counselors, guidance counselors and other trusted adults can help you think of options other than hurting yourself or someone else.

RESOURCES:

TeenLine..... 747-TEEN or 1-800-273-TALK
(to talk or for additional resource information)

DEPRESSION

It's normal to feel sad once in a while. Even the most "up" person can feel down. It's important to have ways/things to do to help you feel better. For example:

- * Be good to yourself. Do something you like doing (listen to music, veg out, rent a silly movie - laugh).
- * Call a friend, family member or someone who cares about you and talk about how you are feeling.
- * Keep busy - do something. Clean out your book bag or closet, join a club at school, make something for someone.
- * Call TeenLine, see your Guidance Counselor or your minister/priest/rabbi.
- * Exercise, get active, take a walk.
- * Write down your thoughts in a letter, journal or poem.
- * Help someone else — do a favor, volunteer.
- * Identify what's happening to make you feel depressed (if you can) and plan some step (however small) to begin working through it.

If you can't pinpoint anything specific that's upsetting you or you're unable to "snap out of it", you may be suffering from depression. This genetic/chemical illness is treatable; however, it causes you to feel bad and can create physical problems. Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference between the illness depression and just feeling depressed. If you feel bad for more than two weeks or have some of the symptoms below, you need to see a health professional.

- * Change in appetite or noticeable weight gain or loss
- * Inability to sleep or sleeping too much
- * Loss of interest in activities, family, or friends
- * Loss of energy or inability to concentrate
- * Crying a lot
- * On-going worrying, anxiety or guilty feelings
- * Hopelessness, helplessness or thoughts of suicide

Depression can be overwhelming. You may feel like there is no end to your unhappiness and that nothing helps. You may feel irritable, insecure and see only the negative in what others say and do. This isn't a weakness and it does not need to be permanent. Call someone to get help so that you can feel better.

TO HELP A DEPRESSED FRIEND

- * Be understanding. Depressed people may be difficult to be around.
- * Be supportive. Your friend needs to know you care.
- * Listen. Encourage them to talk about problems.
- * Be patient. They may be unable to pinpoint the problem or express their feelings.
- * Encourage them to get help. Explain getting help is a sign of strength. Ask someone how to help them or offer to call or go with them to see someone.
- * Keep on trying. They may be afraid of bothering you and may push you away. Remember they are hurting and do need help.

If you, or a friend, think you're suffering from depression or are just feeling down, doctors, therapist, hospitals, **TeenLine (747-8336 or 1-800-273-8255)** and the numbers below can help.

RESOURCES:

Family Services.....744-1348
(counseling for anyone in the Tri-County area)

Mental Health Centers:

Berkeley County.....761-8282 or 1-888-202-1381
Charleston Child and Adolescent services.....740-6136
Dorchester Child and Adolescent services.....871-4030

DISABILITIES - PHYSICAL/MENTAL

Dealing with a physical or mental disability is a challenge. It can cause educational, economic, emotional and social problems. One of the most difficult things about being physically or mentally challenged is the prejudice and being left out and/or teased by others. Having a disability is nothing to be ashamed of nor does it make you less of a person. If other people can't deal with the disability, it's their problem. No one has the right to make you feel bad about yourself. You control your feelings about yourself. (the "Self Esteem" section can help.)

If you're not physically or mentally challenged, you probably know someone who is. Remember they're a person with feelings too - no better or worse than you are. No one's perfect. We all have limitations. Try to be a friend. It's OK to feel uncomfortable around people who are different than you. Talk about your feelings. Ask questions. Learn what you can do to help. Don't be afraid to get to know someone with a disability!

Whether you are living with a visual, hearing, speech, physical, emotional or mental disability or if you know someone who is, there are services in the Tri-County area that can help (educationally, vocationally, socially and emotionally). Call TeenLine (747-8336 or 1-800-273-8255) to talk and/or to find out what programs are available.

EATING DISORDERS

While it's important to watch your weight and keep in shape, some people let eating become a problem by being so focused on body image that their lives are controlled by this concern. Eating or not eating in an attempt to feel better about yourself or to avoid feelings is not healthy. It causes serious problems and can be life-threatening. Eating disorders are addictive and get worse if not helped.

Different types of eating disorders have some similar warning signs. People with eating disorders often: measure their worth by their size, think of food and diet constantly, exercise obsessively, feel guilty or mad after eating, lie about how much they eat, avoid situations where there's food, get angry when approached about eating and deny there's a problem. They are often perfectionists.

ANOREXIA NERVOSA is a disease of self-starvation. Health risks include: loss of menstrual cycles, constipation, loss of hair, low pulse rate and body temperature, and extreme sensitivity to cold temperatures. Some anorexics are at risk of heart and organ failure, which can result in death. Anorexics do not see themselves as thin, even though they are usually at or below normal body weight.

BULIMIA involves binge eating (eating large amounts of food) and purging (getting rid of the food eaten by vomiting, using laxatives and/or excessive exercise). Internal bleeding, tooth decay, headaches, dizziness and damage to the esophagus and body organs can result. It can be a life-threatening disease. Bulimics often have weight changes and sometimes experience anorexic periods.

Both anorexia and bulimia usually start as an effort to lose weight; however, it gets out of control. Those who struggle with these illnesses are never satisfied with their weight.

COMPULSIVE OVEREATING OR OBESITY involves an inability to control the amount of food eaten. Food is used to comfort or reward. Being significantly overweight leads to serious medical problems such as high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. It also can decrease your life span.

Eating disorders are potentially life - threatening and are not cured by telling someone to eat or not to eat. For many with an eating disorder, control is the big issue. They often present a “together” image yet feel out of control inside. These are serious emotional problems that can lead to death. If you have tried to stop and failed, there is help. You are not alone.

THINGS THAT CAN HELP:

- * Admit you have a problem.
- * Realize no particular diet, weight or body size automatically leads to happiness.
- * Talk to someone – a doctor, parent, counselor, or TeenLine.
- * Get professional help. A good approach combines medical treatment and therapy.

HOW TO TALK TO/HELP A FRIEND:

- * Be honest - let them know you are concerned about their health.
- * Keep stating your concerns even if they deny or argue that they do not have a problem. Do not argue back.
- * Offer to help them get help.
- * Tell a trusted adult - do not keep your concerns a secret.

If you are worried about your own or a friend’s weight or eating behaviors, talk with someone, check with a doctor, and get help.

RESOURCES:

- Mental Health Center: Berkeley County.....761-8282 or 1-888-202-1381
 - Charleston County.....740-6136
 - Dorchester County.....871-4030
 - MUSC’ Outpatient Programs.....556-4744
 - Overeaters Anonymous.....577-9499
 - TeenLine.....747-TEEN (8336) or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- (to talk or to get numbers to support groups and therapists)

EDUCATION - EXERCISING YOUR BRAIN

An education is one of the most important steps to take in becoming an independent person. However stressful school can be, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity. It's up to you to get the most out of it! Traditional school programs are not for everyone. That's why alternatives for completing your education exist.

ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- * **GED** (General Education Development Test) This program is for students who have not graduated high school. The GED can open doors to college, trade school and job opportunities. To take the test you must be at least 18, or have special permission if you are 16 or 17. For more information about the GED call:
Berkeley County Adult Education/District Office:.....723-4627 Ext. 8690
Charleston County Adult Education/District Office:.....937-6407
Dorchester County Adult Education/District Office (2).....873-7372
Dorchester County Adult Education/District Office (4).....563-4535
- * **NIGHT SCHOOL** offers evening classes. Check with your district office listed above to see what programs are offered.
- * **ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOLS** are designed to meet the needs of students that are not happy with traditional high schools. Check with your district office.
- * **VOCATIONAL/TRADE SCHOOLS** provide training for a specific trade like plumbing, cosmetology, auto mechanic, etc. Check with your district office for details.

For information about what educational programs are available in your county, contact your school district office - numbers listed above.

If you're concerned about poor grades, here are some suggestions: study with others, get help from a teacher or a parent, do extra credit work or check with your guidance counselor or school district office for information about getting a tutor.

- * **ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE** - If you are having a problem learning English, there are courses offered that can help. Check with your district office to see when and where classes are being held.

LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

- * **COLLEGE** offers the opportunity to continue your education. Going to college is about planning ahead. You don't have to go through it alone. School counselors can provide information on what's needed to get into college and what colleges are available to you. If cost is a concern, there are loans, grants, scholarships and work-study programs available. Check with your school counselor or your local library.

The Tri-County area has several colleges. Check the telephone Yellow Pages under "Schools" - Academic, Colleges and Universities.

- * **TRAINING** - Perhaps you have a specific talent or interest that can't be met in college. Check the telephone Yellow Pages under "Schools" - Business & Vocational.
- * **THE FUTURE** - College, no college, stay in school, drop out, job, no job; these are all difficult decisions to make. You are in control of your future. Set your goals, ask questions, try new things, get involved and plan ahead. There are people and things that can help you get what you want!

EMPLOYMENT

Finding job isn't always easy. Although you can get a job at age 15, many jobs require you to be at least 16 and require you have previous work experience. One way to get work experience is to get some volunteer experience that will help you get a paying job and show employers you're a good employee.

BEGINNING YOUR JOB SEARCH:

- What do I like to do? What do I know how to do?
- What skills do I have? Computer skills? Typing? Child care? Photography? Etc.
- How will I get to and from work? (Employers are looking for dependable employees.)
- When can I work (hours and days)?
- Do I have any activities/hobbies that could increase my chances of getting a job?
- Do I have a Social Security Number? If not, ask your parents or call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213.

FINDING A JOB: Look everywhere – ask everybody. Check the classified section of the newspaper, bulletin boards at school, hospitals, grocery stores and community centers, check employment offices and ask family and friends. Let people know you are looking for work. Ask your Guidance Counselors about employment or volunteer opportunities and for information about Job Training Partnership Act funded programs.

Any kind of job or volunteer work can help “get your foot in the door” and put you in contact with adults who can recommend you for future employment. Ideas include: babysitting, yard work, odd jobs around your neighborhood, helping a relative or friend who has a business, or volunteering. (Though unpaid, volunteering offers ways to gain experience, learn new skills and meet business people). It’s important to get some work experience!

KEEPING A JOB: Employers look for workers who are dependable, responsible, and trustworthy. If there’s a problem at work, don’t wait for it to get worse. Go to your boss or to the person you’re having the problem with and talk about it. If you decide to quit, let your boss know why and give at least two week’s notice. Don’t just stop showing up or lose your temper. You’ll ruin your chances of a recommendation for future jobs, scholarships, etc.

If you’re stressed about not having money and are unable to find a job, keep trying - jobs open regularly. Don’t be too proud to take a job. When you need money, nothing is beneath you. Don’t do anything foolish or illegal. This may ruin your chances of ever finding a job! Remember **(747-TEEN or 1-800-273-TALK) TeenLine** is there to talk.

RESOURCES:

Job Corps.....722-1359

Employment Security Offices of:

Berkeley County (16 years old and up) 761-4400

Charleston County (16 years old and up) 792-7070

Dorchester County (16 years old and up) 821-0695

Young Adult Services Department at the Charleston County Public Library..... 805-6903

FAMILY

Family can mean all kinds of things – living with two parents, with just one parent, with other relatives, with an adopted family or in an orphanage. Whatever it is, it can be a challenge living under the same roof with different personalities. Being a teen in a family can be particularly tough. Often parents are still trying to take care of you or “hold on”, and you’re trying to gain and keep some independence.

RULES

Living under someone else’s roof often means living by someone else’s rules. You either obey them or suffer the consequences. The choice is yours.

CHORES

Every member in a family has jobs to do that keep the family going. However, finding time to do chores can be difficult. Try making a schedule of things you need to get done. If you’re feeling overwhelmed or if something is too hard, try talking (not screaming) with your parents or guardian. Chores can show you are able to handle things responsibly

CURFEW

Curfews always seem too early. Parents set them because they worry and care. If there is a special occasion, try to talk with your parents ahead of time to work out a compromise (you give a little – they give a little).

ABUSE

No one deserves to be abused – physically or mentally! If there is physical, emotional, mental, or sexual abuse occurring inside or outside your family, **THERE IS HELP**. Tell someone – parents, guidance counselors, TeenLine, police, minister, rabbi or the Department of Social Security Services. (See “Child Abuse” section.)

EXPECTATIONS

Expectations can be hard to live up to, especially if you don’t know what they are. Try talking about what’s expected of you and what you expect. Discuss if expectations are realistic or not. Remember the most important thing is: Are you living up to your own expectations? Are you trying **your** best?

APPRECIATION

Have you thanked someone in your family lately? It’s easy to take our family for granted because we feel they will care for us no matter what. Remember that all people need and want to feel appreciated.

NO CONTROL

Things happen in families that you don't have control over like fighting parents, bills and divorce. These are issues between your parents, not you. Although everyone is affected, it helps to remember it is not your fault and they'll be your parents no matter what.

GETTING ALONG

It's hard to get along when you are feeling upset, angry, or hurt. Some things to keep in mind:

DON'T

- * allow things to build up.
- * ignore or pretend you don't care or that it doesn't matter when it does.
- * take things out physically or verbally on yourself or on others.

DO

- * talk things out.
- * identify at least one person in your family you can turn to.
- * talk about your feelings and things that are bothering you.
- * find positive ways to release your stress/anger.

Violence should NEVER be used under any circumstance. If there is no one in your family who will listen, try and find someone who will listen and allow you to blow off steam. **Always COOL DOWN** before you talk to those who have made you upset. (See "Dealing with Conflict and Stress" section.)

The more aware you are of what upsets you, who most gets to you, what you can and can't control and what you need, the better off you'll be to handle family life. Below are questions to get you thinking about your relationship with your family. Circle all that apply.

With whom do you have the most family conflicts?

- a. mom/stepmom
- b. father/stepfather
- c. brother/stepbrother
- d. sister/stepsister
- e. other:

What is it usually about?

- a. chores
- b. attitudes/opinions
- c. control
- d. independence
- e. curfew/rules
- f. privacy/space
- g. expectations
- h. your friends/relationships
- i. other:

What normally happens when there's a conflict in your family – how is it handled?

- a. shut mouth/ignore
- b. take it out on others
- c. hitting/breaking objects
- d. take it out on self
- e. sarcastic remarks
- f. yelling and screaming
- g. violence
- h. talk about it
- i. other:

Who do you feel the closest to in your family? If there was a problem to whom would you go to first?

- a. mom/stepmom
- b. father/stepfather
- c. brother/stepbrother
- d. sister/steptester
- e. aunt or uncle
- f. grandmother or grandfather
- g. other

What thing(s) can you work on to make things better at home?

- a. patience
- b. communicating
- c. seeing things from their side
- d. controlling temper
- e. listening
- f. not letting things build up
- g. other

You can't pick your family so it's important to develop ways that help you handle and live with your situation.

TIPS FOR HANDLING FAMILY STRESS:

- Know what you can and can't change or control (like how others act)
- Take time out for you – give yourself space – go for a walk
- Get away from the screaming and yelling
- Own up to your feelings and your actions (don't blame others)
- Remember, in order to get respect you have to give it.
- **When things are bothering you, talk with your family, someone else, or TeenLine (747-8336 or 1-800-273-8255).**

FRIENDS

Friendships are very important. They contribute to some of the best times and can be part of some of the worst. **KEEP IN MIND:**

- It's not always easy to be a friend or to keep a friend.
- Almost all friendships hit difficult times.
- Friendships offer a chance to belong, yet it's important to maintain some individuality by keeping your values, interests, and beliefs. True friends don't try to pressure or control you.
- Friendships don't always last "forever"; people change, move or grow apart. It is normal to have lots of different friends.
- If you're looking to make friends, get active in school and in the community. The more involved you are, the better your chances of meeting and making friends.
- To be a good friend to someone else you must be a friend to yourself first.
- To have a friend is to be a friend.

THINGS THAT BUILD SOLID FRIENDSHIPS

- **Similar interests and beliefs – you don't have to agree on everything.**
- **Respect – treating a person the way you want to be treated.**
- **Acceptance – take a person for who they are. Don't try to change or control.**
- Understanding – we all make mistakes.
- Honesty – being honest with yourself and with the other people about your concerns and feelings.
- Give and take – make sure you do some of the inviting, the listening, the complimenting, the sharing and the encouraging.
- Good communication – be as good as listener as you are a talker. (See "Communication" section for help.)
- Compromise – you can't always get your way. You must give in once in a while.

THINGS THAT DESTROY FRIENDSHIPS

- Feeling used – No one likes to be taken advantage of.
- Mistrust - Don't talk about someone behind their back or break a confidence. Don't say one thing and then do another.
- Pressuring – Allowing people to have their own values and own opinions is a key to good friendship.
- "Me, me, me" – Having everything focus on one person gets old and a friendship won't survive it.

- Possessiveness – You don't own another person.
- Jealousy – Friends share the good times and bad times. We should be happy for our friends if they are happy for themselves.
- He said/she said – If you have something to say about a friend, say it to them. If someone tells you something a friend said about you, go to the source before you get angry. (“Dealing with Conflict” section can help.)

Qualities you look for in a friend are the same qualities you could be working on in yourself to make you a better friend. Look over this list and rate yourself, then look over it thinking about your friends ... how do they rate?

1 2 3 4 5
 lowhigh
 HONESTY
 ACCEPTANCE

1 2 3 4 5
 lowhigh
 RESPECT/

1 2 3 4 5
 lowhigh
 CARING/CONCERN
 ABILITY

1 2 3 4 5
 lowhigh
 LISTENING

1 2 3 4 5
 lowhigh
 INTERESTING

1 2 3 4 5
 lowhigh
 FUN TO BE AROUND

1 2 3 4 5
 lowhigh
 WOULD LOOK OUT GOT ME

1 2 3 4 5
 lowhigh
 CAN BE TRUSTED

What other qualities do you think are important? Use the same scale to rate yourself on them.

Some “what ifs” to consider

- If you were going to do something that wasn't in your best interest, would your

friend(s) try to talk you out of it?

- If your friend had done or said something that hurt your feelings, would you be able to talk it over with them?
- If there was something you didn't want to do, would your friends respect your decision?

(YES answers show positive friendships.)

Having friends is great; however, everyone experiences loneliness at some point in their life. It's possible to feel lonely even when there are other people around. You can't just wait for folks to come to you. You have to work to make friends.

- You may need to push yourself to get involved in activities at school or in the community. Think about volunteering or joining a club.
- Be friendly, show interest in others and be willing to open up about yourself.
- Work on becoming the kind of person you would like to have as a friend.
- Practice being a good listener. People will learn they can come to you. They'll learn they can trust you and think of you as a caring person.
- Be patient. It takes time and repeated efforts to make friends.
- Seek out others who appear to be in need of friends.
- Loneliness is not a permanent state.

The "Things to Do" section may be helpful. While fitting in and feeling accepted is important, realize not everyone is meant to be friends. Remember don't compromise yourself to make or keep a friend. If you are having trouble with friends or teasing, see the "Teasing/Bullying" section for help. Also, **TeenLine (747-TEEN or 1-800-273-TALK)** is there to talk and help you think things out.

HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH

How you're feeling physically and mentally directly affects how you live your life. When you're sick, tired or not taking care of yourself, it makes it difficult to enjoy life. HAVE FUN. Handling problems in school, on the job etc. is more challenging when you're not feeling well.

Taking care of yourself can help you stay healthy, avoid getting sick and can give you the strength and ability for handling stress and illnesses. Basically, when you're feeling good and feeling strong, life is easier to handle.

TIPS FOR BEING GOOD TO YOURSELF:

- Eat healthy. A well balanced diet is important. Don't stuff yourself! Avoid foods high in sugar, fats and additives.
- Exercise at least 3-4 times a week. Get your heart rate up by walking, riding bikes, running, playing sports, dancing, aerobics, weight lifting, etc.
- Get enough sleep. Rest when you need it. If you don't have time to sleep, just resting or vegging out can help. You might be trying to do too much.
- Avoid alcohol/drug use. These substances have damaging effects on your body as well as your mind (they are depressants).
- Be safe. Wear seatbelts, helmets, and other protective gear.
- Pay attention to your body and how you are feeling. If you aren't feeling well, slow down until you start feeling better.
- See the school nurse or a doctor if you feel sick. Before taking any medication, always talk with a doctor first.
- Have fun. All work and no play is boring and not healthy.
- Talk about things that are upsetting or bothering you. Holding things inside can do both physical and mental damage.

You have only one life. It's no fun if you are feeling bad or tired for most of it. Take care of yourself by taking care of your health. Be good to YOU. A healthy lifestyle leads to a healthier life. For more information about your health and taking care of yourself, talk with your doctor, look in Telephone Yellow Pages under "Physicians and Hospitals" or call the numbers below.

RESOURCES:

Health Department:

Berkeley County.....723-3800 ext.4600, 719-4600

Charleston County.....579-4500

Dorchester County832-0041 or 832-1624 (St. George)

TeenLine.....747-TEEN or 1-800-273-TALK

(to talk or get additional resource information)

THE LAW AND YOU

Don't feel a sense of false security because you are under 18. South Carolina has laws

dealing with crimes committed by young people. Depending on how serious the crime, you can be charged and treated as an adult. If you get a police record, it can be permanent and can make it difficult for you to get in college and/or find a job. Anyone can check and see you have a record. Think before you act.

ALCOHOL LAWS

It's against the law to buy or have alcohol in your possession if under the age of 21.

Attending an underage party/gathering where there's alcohol/drugs is illegal.

PENALTY: \$200 fine, up to 30 days in jail and mandatory driver's license suspension of 90 days to 6 months.

FALSE IDENTIFICATION (FAKE I.D.'S)

It's against the law to have, lend or use an altered driver's license or personal id card. Using fake information (picture, birth date) to buy alcohol is also illegal.

PENALTY: \$200 fine, up to 30 days in jail and mandatory driver's license suspension of 90 days to 6 months.

ALCOHOL/DRUGS AND DRIVING

It's against the law to drive while under the influence (D.U.I.). Even a small amount of alcohol/drugs (prescription/non-prescription/street drugs) can greatly reduce your driving ability, leaving you at more risk of traffic violations and accidents. You should never try to drive while under the influence of alcohol/drugs, nor ride with someone who is under the influence. If taking medication (prescription or non-prescription), ask your doctor what the side effects are before driving.

PENALTY: \$200 - \$6000 fine and 30 days - 5 years in jail depending on the number of offenses. Every offense results in suspension of your license and 2nd offenses will require appearance in general sessions court.

If someone is injured: \$5,000 - \$10,000 fine and 30 days - 10 years in jail. If someone is killed: \$10,000 - \$25,000 fine and 1 to 25 years in jail no probation.

POSSESSION, PURCHASING AND SELLING OF DRUGS

The possession, use, purchase (for self or others) or sale of marijuana and other drugs is against the law.

PENALTY: Possession - up to \$200 fine and 30 days in jail and suspension of driver's license. Harsher punishments for harsher drugs. Selling - 5-10 year prison term and appearing before general sessions court.

DISORDERLY CONDUCT

Anyone on any public highway or place who is grossly intoxicated or otherwise disorderly or loud may be charged with disorderly conduct.

PENALTY: up to \$100 fine or imprisonment up to 30 days.

POSSESSION OF WEAPONS

It's against the law to have possession of a weapon without the proper permit. It's always a crime to bring a weapon on school property. Carrying a weapon is asking for trouble. It puts you at greater risk for hurting or killing yourself or someone else. There are less dangerous and legal ways for settling arguments, defending and protecting yourself. Think about all your options before you act.

PENALTY: up to \$1,000 fine and/or jail for up to 1 year along with expulsion from school if found on or near school.

BREAKING AND ENTERING

Entering a building, house or car without permission is against the law.

PENALTY: \$1000 fine and/or can result in jail time up to 5 years.

SHOPLIFTING/STEALING/THEFT

Taking things that don't belong to you without the permission of their owner is stealing.

Whether it's from a store, house or car, it's a crime.

PENALTY: fined up to \$5000, could be prosecuted in a court of law, jailed up to 10 years and have a police record for life.

PRANKS/VANDALIZING

It's against the law to damage another person's property. A simple prank like egging a house or car could result in a juvenile record that can hurt your future and other people. Some schools and employers will not accept you with a record.

PENALTY: \$200 fine and/or can end up in a detention hall or in jail for 30 days. Could be charged and have a criminal record.

DRIVING WITHOUT A DRIVER'S LICENSE

In South Carolina, you are eligible for a Learners Permit at age 15. This allows restricted driving. At 16, you can get your license. If interested in getting your license, there are driving courses in most schools and in the community which will also help lower your car insurance. (Check phone book Yellow Pages under "Driving Instruction".)

PENALTY: \$200 fine and 30 days in jail and/or could delay the time you will be eligible for your driving license.

TRUANCY

Cutting or skipping school, if you are under 17, is against the law.

PENALTY: Conference with parent and school, In-School detention, After School detention, Saturday school, suspension, Truancy Diversion/Counseling Program, denied school credit, parent fined \$50 dollars per absent day or jailed 30 days per absent day and/or DSS, DJJ and Family Court referral.

ARREST

If you or someone you're with is picked up by the police, you have rights. If this happens, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Don't resist arrest. Attitude and cooperation affect how you're treated.
- You should give your name, address, phone number, date of birth.
- You don't have to say anything else without advice from a lawyer.
- If you give permission to any type of search, they can search you.
- Everyone has the right to a lawyer. If you can't afford one, the court will appoint one for you.
- Ask police to call your parents or another trusted adult.

CAR ACCIDENTS

Don't panic. If in an accident, drivers should exchange names, addresses, phone numbers, names of insurance companies and driver's license numbers. All accidents involving any type of damage must be reported to the police. If injuries, call 911 immediately. Whatever you do, do not run away from the scene of the accident.

Whatever your situation is, there's help.

RESOURCES:

Crime Stoppers of the Low country.....554-1111, 1-800-452-1111
Referral Service, SC.....1-800-868-2284
Ask-A-Lawyer.....1-888-321-3644
TeenLine (to talk and get other numbers).....747-8336 or 1-800-273-8255

LOSS

Losing someone or something you know and love is tough. Everyone faces loss in life. It might be the death of a friend or a family member, the breakup of an important relationship, death of a pet, a move, or a change in schools. Although each situation is different, there are similarities.

- People react differently to loss.
- A range of emotions may be felt including sadness, anger, confusion, fear, numbness or nothing at all. These are normal.
- Feelings can be overwhelming at times, and you might feel like you can't get it out of your mind. Some losses take a long time to get through. Be patient. This changes with time so hang in there.
- Feelings can come up suddenly. They can be triggered by a sight, a scent or a sound.
- If you ever feel stuck, or like you are not getting through a loss, don't be afraid to ask for help.
- Dealing with loss and getting on with life doesn't mean that you have to forget the person, place or thing. (You may want to find a special way of remembering - a picture, a memento, a letter in which you write out your memories, a poem that reminds you of them, etc.)

HELPING A FRIEND THROUGH LOSS

- The most important thing you can do is listen.
- Talk about the loved one. If you knew them, share your memories.
- Nothing can make the hurt go away. Some kind things to say are: "I'm sorry", "I'm here for you", "Can I do anything to help?"
- Avoid saying "I know how you feel", it can be so aggravating to hear!

If you or someone you know has had a loss in their life and is having a hard time dealing with it, talking about it can help. **TeenLine** (747-TEEN or 1-800-273-TALK) will listen as well as give you information about other helping agencies and people.

MAKING CHOICES

Almost everyone wants to "fit in" and to feel liked, especially by friends. Friends and peers can be the most important and influential people in your life. They can affect how you dress,

act, and feel with their words and actions.

Peers can lead you to do good things like playing sports or studying hard. They can also pressure you to do things that can get you into trouble or hurt someone such as cheating, lying, or teasing. There can also be pressure to do things with even more serious consequences: fighting, stealing, using alcohol/drugs, or having sex.

Standing up for yourself by making good choices is challenging, especially when friends are trying to influence your decisions. Sometimes it's necessary to make choices that threaten fitting in and getting along. Whether it's a simple decision like what to wear or a more serious one like whether or not to have sex, think about and make your decision based on what's best for you. You have to live with the consequences of your actions.

Your friends can not make you do or say anything you don't want to do. It may feel like that because of the pressure, but you control your actions. Always consider yourself first. What are you comfortable with? Will you respect yourself? Can you get hurt or in trouble?

To help make GOOD CHOICES, ask yourself the following questions:

- Why does this person want me to do this? Control, fear, blackmail ...
- Why do I feel I need to do it? Am I afraid, insecure ...
- What will I get out of this if I go along and do it - what are the consequences?
- Pros and cons.
- What are the consequences if I don't do this? - Pros and cons.
- What is the best thing for ME? Can I get hurt, get in trouble or hurt someone else?

Base your decision on what you are comfortable living with because you will have to live with it. You have the right to say "no". Here are some tips for saying "no" and standing up for yourself:

- change the subject
- make an excuse
- explain your reason for not wanting to go along with them
- reverse the pressure - talk them out of what they are trying to talk you into suggest a better idea - "I'd rather do"
- challenge them - "Why do you want to do this?"
- avoid the situation - walk away - ignore them
- joke about it - "It'll ruin my reputation."

- choose to hang out with people who think more like you - who have similar values
- say no and mean it

If your friends don't respect you and your choices then maybe they're not worthy of your friendship. Not everyone is doing "it". Seek out people who will appreciate and accept you - not try to control you! See "Friends" section to help you evaluate your friendships.

It's not always easy to make good choices - think and talk about your decision with someone you trust: family, a school counselor, an adult, a friend you respect, or call **TeenLine** (747-TEEN or 1-800-273-TALK).

PREGNANCY

Every time you have sexual intercourse you are at risk of getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant. If you or someone you know thinks she is pregnant, it is important to have a pregnancy test in a medical setting as soon as possible. Home pregnancy kits are not always accurate.

If you want to get pregnant to have something to love or to love you, to keep or get a relationship going or to just have fun, think again. Bringing another life into the world holds a lot of responsibility and doing it for the wrong reasons can damage both you and your baby's life. Not to mention what the damage it can do to a relationship.

DO YOU KNOW THE FACTS? True or False?

- 1. You can't get pregnant your first time?**
- 2. You can't get pregnant while on your period (menstruating)?**
- 3. You can't get pregnant if intercourse is not completed/climaxed?**
- 4. You can't get pregnant when you are on Birth Control Pills?**
- 5. Douching after intercourse can help prevent pregnancy?**
- 6. An underage father is legally responsible for child support and taking care of his child?**
- 7. Getting pregnant is a good way to guarantee you will be loved and cared for by the father of the baby?**
- 8. Once you give birth (being in labor), the hardest part of having a baby is over?**

Questions 1-5 are false: Nothing can prevent pregnancy 100% except not having sex (abstinence).

Question 6 is false: An underage father has no legal responsibility for taking care of his child. The mother of the baby is legally responsible for the well-being of her child, unless the child is adopted.

Question 7 is false: Getting pregnant or having a baby does not guarantee you love from anyone - not even the baby.

Question 8 is false: The most difficult part of having a baby is being a parent and caring for the child financially, emotionally and physically: changing dirty diapers, night time feedings, crying, sickness, discipline. You will be giving up your time, our energy, and your freedom for your child until they are an adult and are able to care for themselves.

Whether planned or unplanned, being pregnant can be scary and confusing. There are so many things to think about and choices to make. If you or someone you know is pregnant and uncertain about what to do, there are places where you (and your partner) can go to discuss your feelings about the pregnancy, your options and to receive the medical services you may need.

It is very important you talk about the pregnancy with your parents or someone you can trust and get medical treatment immediately. Without medical attention, the mother and the unborn child's life could be in danger.

You can always call **TeenLine (747-8336 or 1-800-273-8255)** and talk confidentially about your feelings and your options, as well as get referrals to help with testing, medical services and whatever choice or plan you decide is best.

RELATIONSHIPS...IS IT LOVE OR...

Physical attraction is often the first thing that draws us to one another. However, it is a deeper attraction, getting to know a person for who they are and enjoying the time you share that helps relationships form.

It's hard to take the first steps in forming a relationship. Some avoid it out of fear of rejection. Remember not going out with someone is not the end of the world. Everyone experiences rejection from time to time.

ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS:

- Relationships take time and work. Both people must be “into” it
- Boyfriend/girlfriend love relationships are easier if you start off as friends.
- Going into a relationship with the idea that you can/will change those habits and traits you don't like, won't work.
- It's normal to feel nervous and awkward at first. Admitting this to yourself and to the other person can help.
- Good relationships make you happy most of the time. If you're not (even if the good times are really good), you should probably get out.
- Just because you're in a relationship or in love with someone doesn't mean you have to have sex. Someone who truly loves you won't pressure you.
- Choose someone for the right reasons, not because your friends say to, because the person's cool or because you're lonely.
- Good relationships are based on honesty, mutual respect, similar interests and feeling comfortable around someone.
- Sometimes people feel trapped and stay in a bad relationship. Reasons for this might be: it's better than nothing, I can help her, I don't want to hurt his feelings, I don't want to be alone. These are not good reasons to stay in a relationship.
- Never stay in a relationship with someone who abuses or hurts you physically, mentally or sexually even if they apologize, promise it won't happen again and/or say they love you.
- Never stay in a relationship that makes you feel uncomfortable or out of place because you won't participate in certain activities like sex or drug use.
- Break-ups are hard, but they happen. Remind yourself it is the end of a relationship, not the end of the world.

The following questions can help you evaluate your relationship.

- + Do you feel good when you are with the person and when you are not?
- + Do you respect this person and they you?
- + Are you allowed to make your own decisions and have your own thoughts/beliefs?
- + Are you comfortable with (not embarrassed by or afraid of) this person's behavior, by the way they treat you and others?
- + Are you two able to talk about most things?
- + Do each of you have time for other interests and friends? Is this respected?
- + Do you have similar interests? Do you think alike?
- + Do you accept and respect each other's faults, strengths, and differences?

It's a good idea for you and your partner to answer these questions. It's not a bad idea to have an objective friend give answers, too. Another tool to evaluate your relationship is to

make a list of what you think is important in a good relationship. How does your relationship rate when compared to your list?

If you are not sure about your relationship, write down your thoughts and feelings for a few days. Then read what you wrote in a few days for a more objective view.

Relationships don't always work out or turn into love. Things and people change. Although everyone's definition of love is different, love should never be used to pressure you or control you.

VIOLENCE (hitting, yelling, threatening, raping, etc.) is **NEVER OK** (See Sexual Assault section). Love is respectful. Losing a relationship is never as serious as giving up your opinions, values and yourself. Make sure you maintain your own beliefs, interests and outside friendships. Surviving a break-up can be difficult, yet it is also a chance to learn how to make future relationships better.

If you are in a relationship (friendship or love) and need/want to talk about it, call **TeenLine** at **747-TEEN or 1-800-273-TALK**.

RUNNING AWAY

Sometimes running away from home feels like the only thing that will make things better. When you're feeling bad and think nothing is helping, it is hard to think clearly. Before you run away, talk it over with someone you trust. (Remember TeenLine is always there to listen.)

If you (or a friend) have tried to solve the problem and are still determined that running is the only answer, find a safe place. Even the strongest, smartest, most streetwise people are taken advantage of, ripped off and seriously hurt while trying to make it on their own.

If it becomes impossible to stay at home, discuss with a caring adult other places you could stay temporarily like a relative, friend, neighbor, teacher, or clergy person. There are places you can go to be safe, to talk things out and to decide what to do next.

Running away may make you feel better at first. Unfortunately, the problem you may be running from does not go away and may even become worse. Talk it out first. Your safety is what's most important.

RESOURCES:

National Runaway Switchboard.....1-800-621-4000

Nationwide listing of runaway shelters, and phone counseling.

Nineline-Covenant House.....1-800-999-9999

TeenLine 747-TEEN or 1-800-273-TALK

A free, confidential place to talk through problems.

SELF ESTEEM

Do you compare yourself to others and always come out worse? Are there people you wish you were? If you answered “yes”, you need to improve your self-esteem. How you feel about yourself is important and affects your life in a big way.

It’s hard to feel good about yourself when others tease or put you down due to your looks, race/ethnic background, religion, family, grades, physical disabilities, clothes, how much money you have/don’t have, etc. When people treat you poorly based on external things, they are the ones with the problem. This is usually a sign that they’re ignorant and insecure and want to make you feel bad too. It’s the qualities inside you that make you a wonderful person.

WAYS TO BUILD YOUR SELF-ESTEEM

- + **Remember you are human.** No one is perfect or has a perfect life. Everyone has problems and issues that upset them. No one is right all the time. We all make mistakes. The key is to learn from them and to continue to try to grow.
- + **Focus on your good qualities.** We all have good qualities about us. No one’s good at everything. Be proud of what you can do—learn to feel good about your skills and personal traits. Make a list of those things and keep it handy to remind you.
- + **Set personal goals.** Decide what you want (good grades, more friends) and go for it. You can’t do it all at once. Taking it step-by-step will get you there.
- + **Concentrate on yourself.** Stop comparing yourself to others and worrying about what they think. It’s how you feel and think about yourself that counts.
- + **Compliment others instead of putting them down.** Make others feel good about themselves, and you’ll feel good also.
- + **Make friends with positive people.** The people you hang around with can

and do have an effect on how you think and feel.

- + **Offer help.** A great way to feel better about yourself is to help others in need - tutor a friend, volunteer ...
- + **Treat yourself well.** Take care of yourself by eating right, getting enough sleep, exercising and making time to laugh and relax.
- + **Be yourself.** The truth is people do respect you more for being yourself and for making decisions you're comfortable with. No one likes a phony.
- + **Get help when you need it.** Life can be stressful and painful. No one is expected to do it all alone. It's the strong person who realizes they need help and finds it!

If you need to talk, try talking to family, friends, guidance counselors, a clergy person or **TeenLine - 747-TEEN or 1-800-273-TALK.**

SEXUAL ASSAULT/RAPE

Rape/sexual assault is any sexual contact or activity that is done without permission. It can happen to anyone - male or female. Rape is an act of violence. Attempted or actual rape/sexual assault are crimes. A rapist can be anyone. It usually is someone known by the victim (date, friend, family member, neighbor, teacher). No one has the right to touch you sexually without your consent - whether or not you know them or have agreed to sexual contact in the past.

Victims of sexual assault often feel ashamed and responsible. **No matter what you say, do or wear, it's not your fault if you're raped.** All people deserve to be safe and have the right to say no, at any point, to sexual behavior.

Although there's no absolute way to prevent rape, the most important thing to do in protecting yourself is to use common sense. Avoid putting yourself in risky situations.

- Keep all windows and doors locked — at home and in your car.
- * Get to know your neighbors and friends - look out for each other.
- Don't go off with people you don't know well.
- Don't let strangers in your house - verify the identity of any repairmen, etc.
- Be aware of your surroundings and the people around you.
- Avoid dark, isolated spots. If alone, walk fast and with purpose.
- Check your car before getting in. Keep car keys in your hand.
- Never hesitate to ask a friend to walk you to your car, etc.
- If someone is following you or if you feel threatened, go to a public place,

run, yell “fire”, blow a whistle, make lots of noise.

VICTIMS OF RAPE OR SEXUAL ASSAULT SHOULD:

- Notify the police immediately, even if it’s the victim’s choice whether or not to prosecute.
- Don’t shower, change clothes, douche. Police need all the evidence they can get.
- See a doctor right away.
- Talk about feelings with people who will listen.
- Get help even if the rape occurred in the past.

Talking and sorting out your feelings will help. Don’t be afraid to get help no matter when it was or who assaulted you - even if it’s a family member or a date.

RESOURCES:

People Against Rape (24 hours a day).....722-RAPE (7273)

TeenLine747-TEEN (8336) or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
(to talk or get other numbers)

SEXUALITY

Your sexuality is part of your makeup from birth. The maturing of your body and changes in your emotions are all parts of your developing sexuality.

It can be frustrating and confusing; there are many mixed messages about love and sex. The media glamorizes sex and encourages enhancing your sex-appeal. On the other hand, you’re told to wait to have sex until marriage or adulthood. Peer pressure to have sex can be intense, as can the physical urges you are beginning to have.

Decisions about sexual issues are some of the most important ones you will make. The possibility of pregnancy and the risk of sexually transmitted diseases are very real and serious consequences. Although you can not get pregnant from oral sex, it is still sex and can be very dangerous (STD’s AIDS)

It’s important to use good judgment and think through decisions about sex so you can make the best choice for yourself. If you’re considering or are already having sex, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I feel pressure to have sex? (to fit in, reputation)

- Am I trying to start or to save a relationship by having sex?
- Am I trying to prove something to someone?
- Am I being used? Using someone?
- Am I ready to select and use a method of birth control?
- Have expectations about the relationship been discussed and how will sex change the relationship?
- Am I ready to deal with the possibility of being a parent?
- How would being a parent affect my goals and dreams for the future?
- What would I do if I found out I had a sexually transmitted disease?
- What would my family say/do if they knew I was having sex?
- Am I/will I feel comfortable with my decision about sex?

Lots of people feel pressured to have sexual contact to prove their love or their maturity.

Remember love involves respect, and someone who loves you will respect your choice to say no. Don't feel embarrassed to choose NOT to do anything you think is "too soon" or "too fast". There are many ways to show someone you care about them without having sexual intercourse or making yourself uncomfortable, and one of the best ways to show maturity is by standing up for what you believe in – doing what you know to be right for you.

Some couples have trouble agreeing on a stopping point. Before you get into a difficult situation, talk about your feelings. Decide what is right for both of you. You have the right to and can stop at any point. No one has the right (not even your boy/girlfriend) to touch you in ways that make you feel uncomfortable or in ways you don't want to be touched. Even if you have had sexual contact before, you still have the right to say no at any point. **It is your body and your choice.** (See "Sexual Assault" section.)

Saying "NO" (ABSTINENCE) to sex to someone you really like is not easy. If that person won't accept no for an answer then they probably don't care for you in the way you think they do, and you really don't need them. Only you know how much you can handle and what you're comfortable doing. You have to deal with the consequences! (See section on "Making Choices" for suggestions.)

If you have questions understanding your sexuality, talk with an adult you trust: parents, doctor, guidance counselor, clergy person. **TeenLine (747-Teen or 1-800-273-TALK)** is there to talk confidentially with you and has a directory of names and numbers of agencies and professionals that can answer your questions.

If you have questions about pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases, turn to these sections

for referrals.

The following agencies can help with sexuality issues.

RESOURCES:

Health Department:

Berkeley County.....723-3800 ext.4600, 719-4600

Charleston County.....579-4500

Dorchester County832-0041 or 832-1624 (St. George)

Dealing with your sexuality can be difficult. Sexual feelings, messages and questions can be confusing. Know you are never alone. **Teenline** is always available to discuss these issues with you. All calls are confidential, free and you can remain anonymous.

RESOURCES:

TeenLine 747-TEEN (8336) or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

(to talk or get other numbers)

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

Anyone who is sexually active is at risk for getting sexually transmitted/veneral diseases (STD's). STD's include the AIDS virus, herpes, syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and veneral warts. The main way to get STDs is through sexual intercourse or any other sexual/physical contact with someone who is infected.

STD's are not anything to be ashamed of nor are they a punishment. They are diseases that, if not treated, can seriously damage your health. The only sure way to know if you have an STD is to go to a doctor or a health clinic.

FACTS

- You don't catch STD's from toilet seats, doorknobs, or casual contact like handshakes or hugs.
- Anyone can get STDs - people of all races, ages and income levels.
- The more sexual partners you have the greater your risk of getting an STD.
- AIDS/HIV and herpes you get once but you have them for life. Other STDs you can get rid of but you can get them again and again if you are

exposed to them.

- No vaccine can prevent STD's but most are treatable.
- It's possible to have an STD without feeling bad or seeming sick.
- You cannot tell if someone has an STD by looking at them.
- If you have an STD, your sexual partner(s) have also been exposed. Tell them! If you don't, their health can suffer and you will pass the disease back and forth.

PROTECTION

The best way to totally prevent getting an STD is ABSTINENCE and to have NO sexual contact (this includes oral sex). If you choose to have sex, know the risks and learn how to protect yourself.

WARNING

The longer STD's go untreated, the more damage they do to your body. Sterility (inability to have kids), heart disease, insanity, paralysis, blindness, deafness, non-healing skin ulcers, deformity, damage to unborn babies, and DEATH are possible consequences.

IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE AN STD, get tested now. Remember - most STDs can be treated and most can be cured. Don't let fear or embarrassment stop you from getting help. STD tests are confidential, and you don't need parental permission.

RESOURCES:

Health Department:

Berkeley County.....723-3800 ext.4600, 719-4600

Charleston County.....579-4500

Dorchester County832-0041 or 832-1624 (St. George)

CDC National STD Hotline 1-800-227-8922

TeenLine 747-TEEN or 1-800-273-TALK

(to talk and get other numbers)

AIDS/HIV

Anyone whether you are heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual can get AIDS, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It can happen to YOU. It doesn't matter who you are but

rather what you DO.

There is no cure for AIDS. AIDS is a disease caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). HIV enters the bloodstream and attacks the body's ability to fight infections/diseases. A person can be HIV positive and not have AIDS.

HIV may live in the body for years before symptoms appear. You cannot tell by looking at someone if they are infected with HIV. A person with HIV can infect others, even if they show no symptoms. Symptoms vary from person to person. Only a doctor and a blood test can tell if someone is infected with the AIDS virus (HIV).

SUICIDE

Thoughts about killing yourself are scary. This does not mean you are crazy; however, killing yourself is. There are people who can help you work through problems and crisis. Problems are temporary. Suicide is permanent. There is help.

If you or someone you know is talking or thinking about suicide, take it seriously. It's not a cry for attention. It is a cry for help.

Friends may tell you that they are thinking of killing themselves and ask you not to tell. **THIS IS A SECRET YOU CAN NOT KEEP.** You'll be a better friend by telling someone: a parent, teacher, counselor, clergyperson, or someone else you trust. You should encourage the person talking about suicide (yourself included) to talk to an adult they trust or suggest they call TeenLine to talk in confidence to a teen.

If you think someone may be suicidal, don't be afraid to ask. Mentioning suicide will not give someone the idea or push them over the edge. Talking about it can prevent it from happening. A suicidal person is not beyond help. The crisis period usually lasts only a short time. A suicidal person needs and **DESERVES** professional help, so that they will get better.

SOME WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE ARE:

- Talking about committing suicide
- Withdrawal from people and activities
- Preoccupation with death (talking, writing, poems, music, books)
- Having a "plan" on how to die
- Giving away prized possessions

- Significant change in behavior and personality
- Increased use of alcohol/drugs

If you or a friend show any of these warning signs, be concerned. Tell someone who can help. The best way to help stop a suicide is by letting the person know that you care and assisting them to get help. Have them promise you to call a friend or TeenLine if they feel like hurting themselves.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Recognize the suicidal warning signs.
- Ask the person in a calm and caring way, “Are you thinking about killing yourself?” or “Are you saying you want to die?”.
- Ask and listen to what’s making them feel like dying.
- Look at one problem at a time - talk about all possible options.
- Encourage them to get help - go with them or make the call if needed.
- Tell an adult you can trust: parents, teachers, guidance counselors, clergy person.
- Keep in touch with the person.

It’s important to let the person know you care and are there to help them. You can not (should not) promise them things you have no control over like; “Your parents won’t get a divorce, he/she still loves you ” You can promise them you will help them think of other options and help them get help!

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, get help. Talk to someone who can help you look at other options.

RESOURCES:

TeenLine 747-TEEN (8336) or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
 (to talk or get other numbers)

211 Hotline (for 24-hour help).....211
 from cell phones.....744-HELP (4357) or 1-800-922-2283

(Also see “Depression” section)

TEASING/BULLYING

Teasing/bullying is the act of person(s) doing/saying things to hurt someone and/or to have control over another person.

- Almost everyone has been bullied at one time in their lives by: school mates, friends, family, neighbors, and adults.
- It comes in many forms: teasing, name-calling, leaving someone out/ignoring, threatening, breaking/taking things, saying/writing nasty things, physically harming. Anything to make a person feel uncomfortable, bad, inferior, not wanted and/or scared.
- Anyone can be a victim.
- Some common reason is being different somehow: religion, skin color, intelligence, looks, money, family, and friends. Sometimes, people are bullied because they look like they can't stand up for themselves making them an easy target.

There is no reason to bully someone. No one deserves to feel unsafe or unwanted. **NO ONE DESERVES TO BE BULLIED.**

Unfortunately, this is a way of life for many students. Some people believe bullying is part of growing-up and not really a big deal. BEING BULLIED IS A BIG DEAL. Bullying can leave one feeling unsafe, that something's wrong with them, insecure, scared to go to school, sick, and that they want to hurt or kill others and/or themselves.

WHAT CAN HELP?

Dealing with bullying can be hard. Please remember you are not the problem the bully is. If you're different, be proud of it! Although you can't control how other people act, you do have control over how you handle things. Here are some tips to try if you are being bullied.

- **Ignore** – pretend you don't hear or see them, walk right passed them.
- **Walk away** – it's hard for someone to bully you if you're not around to listen. Go where there are others around – preferably adults! Run if you have to.
- **Speak up/stand up for yourself** – tell the bully how you feel about what they are doing.
- **Turn it around – humor** “well thank you for noticing”, “oh well that's your opinion and we're all entitled to one”. Try to throw them off track by asking them to repeat what they said.
- **Stay in control** – it's ok to be upset but don't let them see you cry, get angry or be upset – that's what they want - to see that they are in control and that you have lost

control. Walk away if you have to! Talk about it or write about it later!

- **NEVER stoop to their low level** – don't tease, threaten or hurt them. Walk away, talk about it with friends, family, teachers ...Again – stay in control!
- **Try not to be alone where you know the bully is likely to pick on you.** Stay later in a class, walk another way, walk/hang with a group, a teacher ...
- **Feel sorry for the bully** - imagine being so insecure or jealous you have to put others down to feel good about yourself or to keep friends.
- **Tell someone you trust – get help** – this is not tattling nor does it make you seem weak. This is you trying to feel/be safe. Try telling family, school . . someone you trust.

Keep trying. Get the help you need and deserve! If you know of someone else who is being bullied, help him or her. Try and stop it – don't join in.. By doing nothing, you are sending the message that it's ok to bully. Encourage the person to tell an adult. Go with them if needed.

ABOUT BULLIES

Bullying is a sign of weakness – a sign of being out of control so you try to control others, try to make others feel scared, sad, out of control.

- Anyone can be a bully – boys and girls – those who get in trouble – those that are popular – good grades – bad grades. Anyone!
- For whatever reason, bullies tend to be insecure, in need of attention, someone who needs to feel in control so they pick on someone to feel better about themselves.
- Most bullies pick on others out of frustration. That's why they choose a victim who is weaker than they are.
- Some bullies just do it to go along with the crowd. This is still wrong.
- Some bullies don't really understand how wrong their behavior is and how it makes the person being bullied feel. Still not a good reason!

Whether you feel good about being a bully or feel terrible, it is still wrong. It is your responsibility to figure out why you feel the need to bully and what would help you feel better about yourself that is not at the expense of someone else's feelings.

ASK YOURSELF:

- * Do you feel pressure from someone? If so who and why?
- * Are you trying to impress someone? If so, who and why?

- * Do you want/need for people to be afraid of you? If so, why?
- * Are you having trouble controlling feelings of anger, hatred?
- * Are you jealous of something/someone? If so, who, what and why?
- * Are you depressed? (see section on Depression)
- * Is someone bullying you? If so, tell someone – get help.

WHAT CAN HELP

- Admitting you are a bully is the first step to helping you feel more secure.
- Knowing why you feel the need to bully people can help you identify other ways to cope. – jealousy, fear, insecure ...
- Put yourself in the other person’s shoes. How would you feel if someone was doing this to you?
- Treat people the way that you want to be treated. **BE THE EXAMPLE!**
- If it’s a matter of temper, anger, hatred, stay away from the person, walk away, and talk about it. (See Section on “Stress/Conflict Resolution”)
- If you want to look big/important try doing something GREAT, something that is helpful – something everyone will be impressed with!
- If in the habit of making fun of someone, stay away from them.
- Practice doing other things when you feel the need to bully like tell a story, tell a joke, do something for someone, ask questions ...
- Talk about the things that are bothering you so you don’t take it out on others. (TeenLine, guidance, doctor, family, counselor, clergy, friends).

Let’s face it. All the bullying in the world does not change who we are. It’s not going to make you a better person, better looking, smarter, more athletic, a better friend. Each of us is in charge of how we feel about ourselves and how we act. It is not the responsibility of someone else. It is our responsibility to treat each other the way that we would like to be treated. So the next time you think about lowering yourself to bully someone stop and think before you act. Get control over yourself. How would you feel if it were you being bullied!

Remember, if you are being bullied or if you are bullying someone, TeenLine is there to help you talk about it and think things out – (747-TEEN) or 1-800-273-TALK).

THINGS TO DO

There’s no reason to be bored or to be a “couch potato” with the number of recreational and volunteer opportunities available throughout the Lowcountry. There is sailing, rock climbing, roller hockey, skating, painting, bowling, drama, music, sports, and clubs to name a few. Or you can create your own fun: picnics in the park, trips to the beach, dress-up parties, visits to

the museum or art gallery, “make your own pizza” parties, video game competitions, etc. Use your imagination.

For more ideas call your Parks and Recreation department by looking in the telephone blue pages under Department of Parks and Recreation. Local skating rinks, theater companies, movie theaters and arcades are located in the Telephone Yellow Pages.

You can always VOLUNTEER. Volunteering can provide you with opportunities to:

- Learn new and/or improve old skills
- Gain work experience
- Meet new people
- Explore work areas of interest
- Improve self-confidence and self-worth
- Learn more about yourself and others
- Escape boredom
- Help out others, perhaps less fortunate than you
- * Build your college and job resume

There are many different types of volunteer experiences. For example, phone counseling, child care, pet care, caring for the elderly, office work, theater work, patient care, tutoring, and serving meals to the homeless, are some possibilities in our area.

To volunteer you only need the desire and the time; decide what it is you want to do and make the call. Most places provide training for their volunteers. There are agencies that can help you identify what it is you want to do and can do, as well as put you in touch with where to go to volunteer.

RESOURCES: For Volunteer Information:

Youth Service Charleston – A Division of the Boys and Girls Club.....937-6517

211Hotline.....211

TeenLine.....747-8336 or 1-800-273-8255

Young Adult Services Department at the Charleston County Public Library.....805-6903

TOLERANCE

The differences between people is one of the things that makes life interesting. No two people are exactly alike despite the fact they may have similar racial, religious, social, educational, or economical backgrounds.

Hatred based on a person's race, religion or other differences is called racism or discrimination and IS WRONG. Unfortunately, there are people who feel threatened by others who are different, not "their own kind". Most often this fear is a result of ignorance and/or insecurity.

It's ok to feel awkward or uncertain around people who are different from you. It is not ok to judge, criticize, make fun of or hurt them because of these differences. Accepting, respecting and not judging others despite their differences is called tolerance. It takes strength, intelligence, and maturity to demonstrate tolerance.

Just because a person does or says something that hurts or angers you, this does not give you the right or make it right to judge others because of this one person's actions. One person does not and cannot represent an entire people!

You are in charge of your level of tolerance. People's differences should not matter to you if they're not directly bothering or hurting you. If someone is bothering you, talk about the specific problem. Don't blame it on the person's differences or who they are. (See "Dealing with Conflict and Stress" section.)

Your opinions, values, and morals make you who you are. You don't have to give up your beliefs to allow others to have theirs.

TIPS FOR TOLERANCE:

- Learn about others - read, explore, talk.
- Admit your fears or concerns and talk about them.
- Ask questions - don't assume you know it all.
- Look for similarities not differences.
- Find out for yourself. Don't believe everything you hear.
- Realize the actions of one does not represent the actions of all.
- View each person as an individual.
- Get to know someone before you judge them.
- Don't make jokes about differences - they can hurt. (See

“Teasing/Bullying” section)

- Respect others. Because someone is different doesn’t mean they (or you) are better or worse.

Violence, name calling, threatening or harassing does not make differences go away, nor does it make you a bigger or better person.

If you’re being bothered or are doing the bothering, don’t do anything that will get you in trouble or hurt you or someone else. Talk about the problem. If not with the person, find a trusted adult or TeenLine (747-TEEN or 1-800-273-TALK).

If you are a victim of a hate/racist crime, contact your local police department. Numbers are listed in emergency section in front of your phone book.

WEAPONS

Being a teen is tough enough without having to worrying about being critically injured or killed by someone with a weapon. It is something you should NOT have to deal with.

Unfortunately, you do! As long as there are weapons and people who are unable to control their feelings of anger, jealousy, and hurt, you are at risk. Their inability to remain in control is taking the lives of teens both on purpose and by accident.

You may not even be the target. But if you happen to be in the area, the bullet may be yours. It just isn’t fair that YOU can not feel safe in your own schools, homes, neighborhoods, and hangouts.

Playing with, carrying, or deliberately using any type of weapon is dangerous. Not only for others but also for yourself. Accidents DO happen. You may not be able to do something about how someone feels or acts, but you do have the potential to make your life and the lives of those around you a little safer.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO TO HELP:

- If it is a friend with a weapon, talk to them about:
 - (1) the dangers of using a weapon (hurting/killing some one = jail or hurting/killing themselves),

- (2) getting rid of the weapon (anonymous drop off at police station), and
- (3) more positive ways to deal with their feelings (See “Dealing with Conflict and Stress” section).

- If it is a friend who will not listen, get help from an adult or someone who you think they will listen to (parent, teacher, sibling ...).
- If it is a friend who won't listen to anyone, turn him or her into the school, their family, or the police. This can be done anonymously.
- If it is an acquaintance or a stranger, turn them into the school, their family, or the police. This can also be done anonymously.

The key is if you have any information about someone having a weapon tell someone who has the ability to take the weapon away. This may seem scary to do because of your own safety, but you can do it anonymously. You may be potentially saving your life or the life someone else.

Violence is never the answer. Expulsion from school, jail time and death are just a few of the consequences of using a weapon to handle a situation. No problem, argument, or person is worth these risks! Think before you act and stay in control. Don't be afraid to get help no matter who or what it involves. In the end, it is the safest thing for all.

RESOURCES:

Crime Stoppers of the Lowcountry554-1111 or 1-800-452-1111

TeenLine747-TEEN (8336) or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
(to talk or get other numbers)

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