



To protect, nurture and advance
the health of our community

ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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For Immediate Release: 5/15/2020

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Mental Health Month - May

Dear Editor,

Did you know that 1 in 5 teens have a mental health illness? I was shocked to read this on the National Alliance on Mental Illness website. Teens deal with a lot of stress and the COVID-19 pandemic has only added to it. Spending extra time with siblings during social distancing can be stressful because you cannot relax with friends. Remote learning is challenging because it is hard to communicate and understand assignments. Sometimes you just feel frustrated and not motivated to get your work done. Eating poorly and not being able to exercise also decreases our ability to stay focused. Some teens have to deal with additional stress that comes with mental illness.

Unfortunately, it is common for individuals with a mental illness to turn to substances, like tobacco to cope. Youth suffering from behavioral health concerns are more likely to use tobacco than their peers. According to the National Council for Behavioral Health about 50% of people with mental illnesses and addictions smoke, compared to 23% of the general population. In addition, smoking-related illnesses cause half of all deaths among people with behavioral health disorders.

As a member of FACT, a youth-driven movement of Wisconsin teens spreading the truth about tobacco, I hope to educate our community about the harmful effects of smoking or vaping especially for those who are affected the most. Visit FACTmovement.org to learn more about the work of FACT groups throughout the state.

Sincerely,

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*Embracing change, partnerships, and best practices to lead
Oneida County to a healthy future.*