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ADOLESCENT DEPRESSION AWARENESS PROGRAM: Reaching students, teachers and parents with critical information on teen depression

Major depression is the leading undiagnosed illness among teens, affecting five percent of American teenagers. Teens suffering with depression are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, experience early pregnancy and struggle socially and academically. Suicide, the most serious risk of depression, is the third leading cause of death among high school students.

It is critical that students, parents and teachers understand the link between depression and suicide, learn to identify symptoms of depression and recognize it as a *treatable* illness. With the Adolescent Depression Awareness Program or ADAP, the Weller Health Education Center is educating teens, their parents and teachers about adolescent depression so that more teens suffering with depression get the help they need.

Developed by Dr. Karen Swartz, Clinical Programs Director at the Johns Hopkins Mood Disorders Center, ADAP is an evidence-based program which aims to reduce the stigma often associated with depression. Over three 45-minute class periods, the Weller Center's master's-level health educators, specially trained to deliver ADAP, help students learn to:

- Identify the symptoms of depression
- Understand the process of medical decision making
- Seek parallels between depression and other medical illnesses
- Realize that no one is to blame
- Recognize suicide as a potential consequence of depression
- Understand that depression is a treatable medical illness

Pre- and post-program tests associated with the curriculum show that students' knowledge about depression (including their understanding of how, when and where to seek help for themselves or a friend) **triples** from pre- to post-test. An accompanying parent education workshop and school faculty in-service on depression awareness are also available.

The Weller Health Education Center's mission is to empower kids to make smarter, healthier decisions. Since 1982, we've done just that for 1.4 million students in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. One of just 34 health education centers across the nation, the Weller Center partners with more than 500 schools and community organizations each year to supplement and enhance the teaching of health, character education and life science through the delivery of outcomes- and evidence-based outreach presentations. Programs are led by master's-level health educators who specialize in connecting with kids and creating an environment where students feel safe asking even the toughest questions.

The Weller Center is currently the only health education center in the country partnering with Johns Hopkins in ADAP's implementation.

To learn more about ADAP please call 610-258-8500 ext. 10.