

## **Mental Health Services Help Keep Teens Alive**

Details

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NJAMHAA members serve individuals of all ages through a variety of outpatient and inpatient programs, as well as providing other services that entail proactive outreach to people in the community.

At West Bergen Mental Healthcare, for example, youth develop skills to manage anxiety disorders through participation in the agency's Social Anxiety Group for Teenagers. Anxiety has interfered with the teens' ability to perform well in school (and, in some cases, have led to dropping out), enjoy social activities, and build or maintain fulfilling relationships. The teens undergo cognitive behavioral therapy, through which harmful thought patterns and behaviors, as well as resulting physical symptoms, are identified and changed.

The program also offers a Parents Support Group, enabling parents to manage their children's symptoms and address the complex feelings associated with raising children who have anxiety disorders. Parents have reported that their teens are successfully using the coping techniques they learned through the program. The youths' specific achievements include navigating Penn Station, going on college interviews, delivering classroom presentations, and taking family members out to dinner and ordering for the entire group.

"These are striking examples of the phenomenal work that mental healthcare providers do every day. Equally important – and equally effective – are services for treating addictions, which commonly occur along with mental illnesses. It is inspiring to learn how these services have empowered individuals of all ages to transform their lives," Dr. Wentz said.