

NEWS RELEASE from Ebdaah

Dubai Gathering Aims To Improve Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing of UAE Teenagers

UK Studies Sound Wake-Up Call For Youth Development

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Dubai UAE, October 07 2015: A ground-breaking seminar in Dubai next month (November) aims to improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of the UAE's teenagers as evidence emerges from the UK that today's lifestyles are increasingly putting adolescents at risk of depression and anxiety.

Organised by Dubai-headquartered multi-disciplinary consultancy Ebdaah, the November 28th seminar – 'Ensuring our Teenagers Live Life to the Full' - will be facilitated by two of the UK's most eminent child and adolescent psychology experts, Dr Madeleine Portwood, the British Psychological Society's spokesperson on child development and neurodevelopmental disorders and Dr Jim Boylan, the consultant child & adolescent psychiatrist who manages the training of registrars and students in the UK's Northern Health Region For Training & Psychiatry.

The seminar, which will run at the Grand Millennium Hotel, Tecom, Dubai, comes in the wake of a Glasgow University School of Psychology study of 400 students in Scotland which suggests that teenagers who engage with social media at night could be damaging their sleep and put their mental wellbeing at risk.

The survey also reveals that increasingly, the cause of stress is mounting anxiety surrounding the need to make important life decisions, with many teenagers suffering from decision paralysis.

The top three stress sources for girls were exam results (57%), making decisions about their future (37%) and arguments with friends (36%).

"Adolescence is a time of high mental health and associated illness risk. International studies confirm that without helpful tools to cope with the stresses and transition into teenage years, mental health problems can develop and worsen in youth with some turning to inappropriate outlets to cope," explained Dr Portwood.

Youth mental health wellbeing has also come to the fore through the findings of the UK's Girlguiding attitude study which revealed most girls (58%) between 13-21 years believe mental health is a serious concern, while more than a third (37%) are worried about cyberbullying and 36% say they fret about not being able to get a job.

Teenage girls felt misunderstood by adults, saying their parents worried more about drug and alcohol abuse than mental illness.

"Another study, this time by the UK's National Citizen Service (NCS), is also something of a wake-up call for parents, educationalists and society leaders, not just in Britain, but everywhere," said Dr Portwood.

“This time, nine in 10 teenagers admitted to experiencing stress in the past year with two thirds of cases leading to symptoms of stress-related illnesses.”

The NCS study highlighted that 88% of 12-18 year-olds have experienced stress over the past 12 months, that the average teenager feels stressed twice a week, that 15 year-olds are more affected than any other age, and that girls stress more frequently than boys.

“In two thirds of cases the stress led to symptoms of related illnesses, including insomnia, eating disorders and depression,” said Dr Portwood.

The study also shows that teenagers are shying away from talking to their parents about the issues they face.

“They are instead turning to social media or trying to deal with the stress alone out of fear of letting their parents know,” said Dr Portwood.

“What is more, the studies suggest adults lack any understanding of the pressure young people are under, with NCS research showing that one in seven grown-ups admit to probably not believing a young person who claims to be stressed, while four in ten say they would immediately think the youngsters were exaggerating.”

The November seminar the last event this year from the Ebdaah Education Series is designed as a learning resource for high school principals, senior staff, school counsellors, health professionals, parents, therapists and doctors.

Its four modules will give insights from a psychiatrist’s and psychologist’s perspective, behavioural and biological interventions and answer questions on screening tools, training and long-term school-based psychiatry services.

More details from: <http://ebdaah.com/events/4226>

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Picture Caption:

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About Ebdaah – Enabling Opportunity UAE-based Ebdaah is a specialist training and capacity building consultancy, delivering support and solutions towards disability management to transform the lives of people with disabilities in the Middle East.

The Ebdaah team of specialists are geared to offering hands-on specialist consultancy, training and deployment to governments, key stakeholders, organisations and corporates to support and drive opportunities for people with disabilities across the UAE and beyond.



Ebdaah was established in Dubai as a partner company of TECOM's Knowledge Village, and has specialist knowledge in supporting special needs inclusion across Hospitality, Retail, Education, Transportation, as well as organisations of all shapes and sizes.

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