

Shrink Rap - A Local Partnership Helps Launch a National Resource

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While psychotherapists typically spend their time seeing clients one on one, their skills can also benefit the larger community. Whether it's providing staff training for a non-profit, helping develop a suicide prevention program, or teaching a classroom of students life skills, mental health workers can make a real difference systemically as well as individually. One such effort has recently resulted in a great resource that is now available to Boulder youth.

There has been a longstanding effort to provide adolescents with accurate information about health and wellness issues in the hopes that, with such information, teens would be able to make better decisions regarding at-risk and other behaviors. Over the last few years, Rosen Publishing Group, based in New York, has been working on developing an up-to-date teen-friendly website that would provide accurate information on a wealth of physical and mental health issues to empower teens to make healthier informed choices. In collaboration with Compass House, a local non-profit that provides counseling to teens and their families, a team of licensed therapists partnered with Rosen and completed a review process of each mental health entry based on their respective areas of expertise. The website (www.TeenHealthandWellness.com), which has won several awards including The Association of Educational Publishers (AEP) Distinguished Achievement Award and The Best Educational Software (BESSIE) Award, is now available online to subscribers. We are fortunate that the Boulder Public Library system has purchased this incredible resource for its patrons to access. Any Boulder Library cardholder can utilize it by going to: www.BoulderTeens.org and clicking on the "Teen Health and Wellness" banner that appears in the middle of the page. After entering your name and library card number, you can access the database.

This is a great resource for teens as well as parents. There are almost five hundred topics that include everything from depression, substance abuse and sexuality to nutrition, conflict resolution and even getting a job. In addition, contact information for a variety of hotline numbers and resources are also listed. The material provided can also be a great supplement to family conversations about teen health issues. Topics of interest can be printed and/or emailed to a friend. Consider taking a moment to sit down at the computer with your adolescent and explore this unique website together.

The Rosen website is but one example of the impact that the psychotherapeutic community can have on the public at large. Sometimes referred to as "Citizen Therapists", there is a movement underway to encourage mental health professionals to take a more active role in serving the wider community. As you may or may not know, Boulder has more psychotherapists per capita than any other city in the country. Imagine the potential impact that this could have on our own community, as well as regional and national initiatives. Mental health professionals can join this movement by engaging in partnerships with community agencies, schools and other rewarding and valuable community projects. For more information on the Citizen Therapist movement, go to: www.cpn.org/topics/families/pdfs/citizen_therapist.pdf.