

# **Madison County Youth Forum at SIUE to discuss teen mental health**

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EDWARDSVILLE - High school students have identified mental health as an important issue in their daily lives. They will have an opportunity to identify problems and engage in solutions related to teens and stress during the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Madison County Youth Forum being held from 6-8 p.m. Monday, Oct. 30 in the Southern Illinois University

Edwardsville Morris University Center's Meridian Ballroom. The public is invited to attend and join this important conversation.

The "Stress Less" public forum is coordinated by multiple area agencies, and co-hosted by the Madison County Youth Board and SIUE's Eta Sigma Gamma (ESG) Public Health Honor Society. The 2016 forum on the topic of substance abuse, led organizers to this year's topic of "stress less," as youth indicated that stress was the biggest reason they were abusing drugs and alcohol.

"Students identify various sources of stress, including social and academic, as one might expect, but they also experience financial stress," said Jennifer Caumiant, MEd, instructor in the School of Education, Health and Human Behavior's (SEHHB) Public Health program and faculty sponsor of ESG. "Ultimately, providing an environment for high school students' voices to be heard will empower them, as well as foster community partnerships."



Prior to the public forum, students will spend the day in breakout sessions facilitated by SIUE ESG members and Madison County Youth Board members. Groups will focus on identifying feasible solutions for managing stress. They will then present their recommendations to a powerful panel of community leaders and policy makers at the forum.

"It takes everybody doing his or her part and being open to listen to try to make a difference," said Amy Yeager, health promotion services manager with the Madison County Health Department. "The Youth Forum is not just a one-day event. It's a movement. The best way for these problems to be resolved is to engage youth, citizens,

parents, community leaders and schools in the process and work together toward solutions.”

The [SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior](#) prepares students in a wide range of fields including public health, exercise science, nutrition, instructional technology, psychology, speech-language pathology and audiology, educational administration, and teaching. Faculty members engage in leading-edge research, which enhances teaching and enriches the educational experience. The School supports the community through on-campus clinics, outreach to children and families, and a focused commitment to enhancing individual lives across the region.