Bright Futures: Addressing Mental Health

What is Bright Futures?

Bright Futures, a HRSA-supported initiative, provides health care professionals and maternal and child health programs updated recommendations for pediatric health promotion, health supervision, and anticipatory guidance for well-child visits. To ensure consistency in the quality of care, HRSA works to implement Bright Futures as the standard for pediatric preventive care. Bright Futures develops materials and tools to provide health care professionals with a common framework for well-child care, to enhance family-provider partnerships, and to create opportunities for health education. These materials and tools include:

- **Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents**: A “how to” manual of all-inclusive, age-specific, evidence-based recommendations and tips to enhance the quality of primary and preventive care. Includes the Periodicity Schedule, which summarizes the recommended well-child screenings/services to perform at every well-child visit.
- **Bright Futures Tool and Resource Kit**: Helpful resources to implement Bright Futures in practice.
- **Educational materials for families**.

What does Bright Futures say about Mental Health?

Bright Futures acknowledges that establishing mental health and emotional well-being is key for children and adolescent development. Mental health focuses on social, emotional, and behavioral health and wellness as well as the early identification and treatment of concerns. Bright Futures promotes mental health through well-child visits at each age and stage of development beginning prenatally with the mental health of the mother, through early childhood, and beyond. Bright Futures offers recommendations for screening and assessment tools that health care professionals can use to detect, prevent, and coordinate care for children and adolescents experiencing mental health issues.

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Bright Futures recommends that health professionals use well-child visits to:
  o Screen for parental, child, and adolescent depression
  o Learn about healthy family relationships, social involvement, and any concerns about domestic violence and substance abuse
  o Identify strengths and challenges in social and emotional development
  o Offer guidance about developmentally appropriate strategies to support positive mental health
  o Support adolescents in avoiding risky behaviors
  o Provide resources to support the mental health and wellness of family and individuals
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To learn more, visit mchb.hrsa.gov/maternal-child-health-topics/child-health/bright-futures.html.