

Mental Health Month: Thornton mom speaks about daughter's struggle with cutting

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DENVER -- May is National Mental Health Month. Statistics show 15 percent of teens report some form of self injury, but there is help available. Just ask Stephanie and Taylor King.

Last fall, 11-year-old Taylor started middle school in Thornton, and her mother, Stephanie, started to notice some changes.

Stephanie says the 6th grader tried vaping and cigarettes. Then, she got suspended for possession of marijuana.

That was hard to take, but Stephanie was about to be blindsided once again.

"9 o'clock at night, the law enforcement comes knocking on my door," Stephanie said.

Thornton police were there to check on Taylor. Someone had reported anonymously to the Safe2Tell program that Taylor was cutting.

"We asked her if we could observe her arms, and as soon as I saw that, I just lost it. She had cuts all over her arms, all over," Stephanie said.

Taylor went to the emergency room, where she was diagnosed with severe anxiety and depression, and transferred to the Medical Center of [Aurora's Behavioral Health and Wellness Center](#) for an inpatient program.

Dr. Chris Rogers was Taylor's therapist.

"I have seen a tidal wave of cutting over the last 10 years," he said.

"Ten, 20 years ago, when someone was cutting, we really saw it as a sign that they were close to committing suicide, they were moving down the steps to hurt themselves, and it was a big warning sign. And these days, it's become pretty, unfortunately, commonplace. A lot of kids are cutting -- more or less -- to sort of fit in," Rogers said.

Some kids want to ease emotional pain. Others want to feel. Rogers says it's important for parents to take cutting seriously and have frank conversation.

"Being open about depression, suicide, drug use, self-harm. That is beneficial to kids. It helps them open up and shows them they don't have to hide," Rogers said.

Seeking professional help is never a bad idea, according to Rogers. He has seen plenty of young people move out of crisis and into a better life.

"The staff saved my daughter," Stephanie said. Taylor came home and is doing much better as she continues with outpatient therapy.

"She learned amazing coping skills," Stephanie said. She says Taylor wants to share her story so that other kids and parents know help is available.

Stephanie [blogs about her experiences](#).

If you or someone you know is in crisis, you can get help 24 hours a day through Colorado Crisis Services. Call 1-844-493-8255 or text "TALK" to 38255.