

Mental Health During COVID-19: Signs that Your Child May Need More Support



Effective School
Solutions

The ongoing stress, fear, grief, uncertainty created by COVID-19 pandemic has weighed on all of us, but many children and teens have had an especially tough time coping emotionally. Continue to check in with your child and watch and listen for signs they are struggling. Invite your child to talk about how they are feeling. Feeling depressed, hopeless, anxious and angry may be signs they could benefit from more support during this time.

Recognizing Signs of Stress in Your Child

Signs of stress and mental health challenges are **not the same for every child or teen**, but there are some common symptoms.

Older Children and Adolescents

May show signs of distress with symptoms such as:

- Changes in mood that are not usual for your child, such as ongoing irritability, feelings of hopelessness or rage, and frequent conflicts with friends and family.
- Changes in behavior, such as stepping back from personal relationships. If your ordinarily outgoing teen shows little interest in spending time with, texting or video chatting with their friends, for example, this might be cause for concern.
- A loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed. Did your music-loving child suddenly stop wanting to practice guitar, for example?
- A hard time falling or staying asleep or starting to sleep all the time.
- Changes in appetite, weight or eating patterns, such as never being hungry or eating all the time.
- Problems with memory, thinking, or concentration.
- Less interest in schoolwork and drop in academic effort.
- Changes in appearance, such as lack of basic personal hygiene
- An increase in risky or reckless behaviors, such as using drugs or alcohol.
- Thoughts about death or suicide or talking about it

Infants, Toddlers and Young Children

May show backward progress in skills and developmental milestones. They may also have increased problems with:

- Fussiness and irritability, startling and crying more easily, and be more difficult to console.
- Falling asleep and waking up more during the night.
- Feeding issues constipation or loose stools, or new complaints of stomach pain.
- Separation anxiety, seemingly clingier, socially withdrawn, hesitant to explore, and seeming to fear going outside.
- Hitting, frustration, biting, and more frequent or intense tantrums.
- Bedwetting after they are toilet trained.
- Urgently expressed needs while seemingly unable to feel satisfied.
- Conflict and aggression or themes like illness or death during play.

Where to Get Help

Don't be afraid to reach out if you or someone you know needs help. Learning all you can about mental health is an important first step.

- Family Doctor
- School Counselors
- Online Resources
- Community Resources

Resources

Delaware County Mobile Crisis
Team: 1.855.889.7827

www.nami.org

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

1-800-273-8255

Teen Help Line 610-352-TEEN