

We are here to listen to you, not to judge you or your family. We are here to help you advocate for what is best for your child and you family. We understand that getting the help that you and your child needs is emotionally, financially, and mentally exhausting.

For more information Contact Iowa Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health at:

**Iowa Federation of Families
For
Children's Mental Health**

106 South Booth
Anamosa, Iowa 52205
Phone (319) 462-2187
Toll Free (888) 400-6302
(Families Only)
E-mail help@iffcmh.org



The statewide organization of the
National Federation of Families
for
Children's Mental Health

Children's Mental Health Is Important!!!



Mental health is how people think, feel, and act as they face life's situations. It affects how people handle stress, relate to one another, and make decisions. Mental health influences the ways individuals look at themselves, their lives, and others in their lives. Like physical health, mental health is important at every stage of life.

All aspects of our lives are affected by our mental health. Caring for and protecting our children is an obligation and is critical to their daily lives and their independence.

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Know The Warning Signs

A variety of signs may point to a possible mental health problem or serious emotional disturbance in a child or adolescent. Pay attention if a child or adolescent you know:

Is Troubled By Feeling:

- really sad and hopeless without good reason and the feelings don't go away
- very angry most of the time, cries a lot or overreacts to things
- worthless or guilty a lot
- anxious or worried a lot more than other young people
- unable to get over a loss or death of someone important
- extremely fearful—has unexplained fears or more fears than most kids
- constantly concerned about physical problems or physical appearance
- frightened that his or her mind is controlled or is out of control

Experiences Big Changes:

- does much worse in school
- loses interest in things usually enjoyed
- has unexplained changes in sleeping or eating
- avoids friends or family and wants to be alone all the time
- daydreams too much and can't get things done
- feels life is too hard to handle or considers suicide
- hears voices that cannot be explained

Is Limited By:

- poor concentration—can't think straight or make up his or her mind
- inability to sit still or focus attention
- worry about being harmed, hurting others, or about doing something "bad"
- need to wash, clean things, or perform routines hundreds of times a day to avoid danger
- thoughts that race—almost too fast to follow
- persistent nightmares

Behaves In Ways That Cause Problems:

- uses alcohol or other drugs
- eats large amounts of food then vomits, abuses laxatives or takes enemas to avoid weight gain
- continues to diet and/or exercise obsessively although bone-thin
- constantly violates rights of others or breaks the law without regard for others
- does things that can be life threatening

If there is concern about a child's or adolescent's mental health, it is important to get help as soon as possible.

You Know Your Child

Remember most children will display these signs as a normal part of childhood. If your child's feelings and behaviors seem to last too long, occur frequently over time, or are disruptive, talk with your child's doctor.