

SIGNS A CHILD MIGHT NEED HELP

Childhood and adolescence are periods of development, and all children will experience challenges as they grow and transition into new life phases. It can sometimes be difficult for parents and other loved ones to determine if a child's struggles are the result of a "growing phase" or if they could benefit from the support of a mental health professional. The following list contains common indicators that your child may need additional support.

ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES

- Struggles with reading, spelling, writing, and/or math
- Struggles with peers and social relationships
- Intellectual potential does not match academic performance
- A marked difference or decline in performance at school
- Difficulty following directions
- Problems with memory and retaining information
- Difficulty processing or organizing information
- Inability to manage homework or meet deadlines
- Problems with attention and staying focused in class

EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES

- Sadness and hopelessness for no obvious reason
- Withdrawal from friends, family, and other important relationships and activities
- Frequently angry or irritable
- Cries frequently or overreacts to typical experiences
- Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or anxiety
- Unable to come to terms with a loss

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- Fearful or having unexplained fears
 - Excessive concerns about physical problems or appearance
 - Frightened that his/her mind is controlled or is out of control
 - Worry about being harmed, hurting others, or doing something "bad"
 - Feeling life is too hard to handle

BEHAVIORAL SIGNS

- Difficulty controlling or containing impulses
- Inability to sit still or focus attention
- Losing interest in things once enjoyed
- Racing thoughts that are nearly too fast to follow
- Unexplained changes in sleeping or eating patterns
- Persistent nightmares
- Avoiding friends or family; frequently wanting to be alone
- Suicidal thoughts
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Cutting; self-harm
- Engaging in physical fights
- Eating excessive amounts of food and then purging; abusing laxatives; or restricting food intake
- Unnecessary dieting and/or exercising obsessively
- Engaging in risky, life threatening activities
- Washing, cleaning, or performing certain routines numerous times per day

MCYAF offers family assessments for a variety of situations, including help for youth who persistently experience one or more of the above. Visit mcyaf.org or call (877) 488-6293 to learn more.