

MENTAL HEALTH RED FLAGS

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Learning about developing symptoms, or early warning signs of depression, anxiety and other disorders in children and teens can help to take action and reduce the severity of an illness. Early intervention can help delay or prevent a major mental illness altogether.

If several of the following are occurring, it may be useful to follow up with a mental health professional.

- Withdrawal — Recent social withdrawal and loss of interest in friends and family
- An unusual drop in functioning, at school, work or social activities, such as quitting sports, a hobby they used to enjoy, failing in school or difficulty performing familiar tasks
- Problems with concentration, memory or logical thought and speech that are difficult to explain
- Increased sensitivity — Heightened sensitivity to sights, sounds, smells or touch; avoidance of over-stimulating situations and feeling easily overwhelmed
- Lack of motivation and apathy — Loss of initiative or desire to participate in any activity
- Feeling disconnected — A vague feeling of being disconnected from oneself or one's surroundings; a sense of unreality, like "if it was a movie"
- Illogical thinking — Unusual or exaggerated beliefs about personal powers to understand meanings or influence events; illogical or "magical" thinking typical of childhood in an adult
- Nervousness — Fear or suspiciousness of others or a strong nervous feeling
- Unusual behavior — Odd, uncharacteristic, peculiar behavior
- Changes in sleep, weight or appetite — Dramatic sleep and appetite changes or decline in personal care
- Mood changes — Rapid or dramatic shifts in feelings
- Angry outbursts or inappropriate expression of anger
- Panic attacks
- Fear of being alone

