

Mental Health During Adolescence

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Introduction

It is normal for teenagers to be moody sometimes. But when are a teen's mood swings a sign of something else, like mental illness? Mental illness is more common among teens than you think. But many types of mental illnesses are treatable, and it's just a matter of finding the diagnosis.

Six facts about mental illness

Here are 6 facts about mental illness in teens that parents should know. Doctors define "mental illness" differently than most of us. Doctors look at specific criteria to determine whether a person has a mental illness. To diagnose a person with major depressive disorder, doctors typically look for depressed mood or a lack of interest in hobbies or recreational activities. However, in teenagers, these signs may appear in the form of changes in their grades, disinterest in friends, or irritability that is out of character. If at least one of those symptoms is present, additional criteria are evaluated.

Additionally, diagnosis requires five of the following seven symptoms:

- Changes in sleep
- New onset of guilt
- Change in energy level
- Changes in concentration or task completion.
- Change in appetite
- Change in motivation
- suicidal thoughts

If a person experience five of these symptoms almost every day for at least two weeks, he or she may be diagnosed with major depressive disorder. Lesson: If your teen gets angry sometimes or stays out late sometimes, it's probably not a cause for concern. On the other hand,

if those feelings persist and there are other unusual symptoms, it's probably a good idea to talk to your doctor.

Types of mental illness in teenagers

The most common mental illnesses among teenagers are:

- Generalized anxiety – excessive worry about everyday matters.
- Social phobia – severe feelings of self-consciousness and insecurity in social settings.
- Depression—persistent feelings of sadness, anxiety, and/or emptiness

Warning signs of mental illness in teens vary depending on the situation. For most kids, one of the obvious signs is going to be a decline in grades, but there are other warning signs as well. Changes in social habits that include withdrawal from school, friends, and activities that your child enjoyed participating in in the past may be another warning sign. Generalized anxiety, social phobia, and depression also have their own unique symptoms.

Symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder include:

- Feeling uneasy, sore, or on edge.
- getting tired easily
- Struggling with concentration
- Feeling irritable
- Feeling tension in muscles
- Having difficulty keeping anxiety levels under control
- Struggles with sleep, such as difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, or not feeling well rested

Symptoms of social anxiety disorder include:

Feeling very anxious at the thought of being around others and struggling to talk to other people Experiencing extreme self-consciousness and fear of humiliation, embarrassment, rejection, or offending people While having at least one of these before getting an accurate diagnosis Some symptoms usually have to be present for several weeks or months, sometimes even just 2 weeks of symptoms are enough to consider the diagnosis. A teen's primary care physician can diagnose. You should first visit your child's paediatrician or family doctor. Their familiarity with your child's medical history can make it faster and easier to reach a diagnosis. During the initial appointment to screen for mental illness, the doctor may ask:

- What symptoms are the teens displaying?

- What are parents concerned about?
- Does the teen have any concerns?
- If the doctor is not comfortable making a diagnosis themselves, they may usually recommend a psychologist or psychiatrist.

Management of mental illness in adolescents

There are several options for treating mental illness in teens, including:

Identifying stress factors, such as not getting enough sleep, skipping meals, or generally lacking a day-to-day routine – and addressing them. Counselling, often combined with medications. They include selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), which are "commonly used, very safe and highly effective for depression, anxiety, and social phobia." Mental illness among teens is more common than people think, but it is also treatable and preventable. However, in most cases, parents do not bring the child up until the problems have been going on for several months because they are in denial. Most parents feel, "This can't possibly happen to my child." If you are concerned you should talk to your teen.

If your teen seems stressed or if there has been a significant change in his behaviour, the first thing to do is to have a conversation with him first. This doesn't necessarily mean a psychiatric diagnosis like depression or anxiety, but it can still be a sign that there is something going on in their life that is acting as some type of stress. If you are concerned that your teen is struggling with mental illness, make an appointment with a Penn primary care physician.