

Symptoms Checklist

Does your child show the following behavior?

- worsening grades
- difficulty with friends and social settings
- fits or outbursts of anger
- decreased interest in school
- decreased interest in food
- lack of motivation or energy
- bully behavior
- self-injurious behavior
- hearing voices that cannot be explained
- changes in sleeping patterns
- frequently fearful or worried
- inability to sit still and focus
- wants to be alone all the time
- persistent nightmares
- suicidal thoughts
- using alcohol or drugs
- violating the law
- dieting or exercising obsessively
- starting fires
- harming animals
- having trouble getting over the death or
Loss of someone important
- witnessed or experienced violence

Every child's mental health is important. These problems can be painful and severe. If you checked one or more items, talk with your child's pediatrician, teacher or guidance counselor today.



Mental Health & Your Child

Resources in the
Gainesville community

Mental Health

Just as important as physical health

Being a parent is no easy task. One of your most important jobs as a parent is to be your child's advocate. If you have any concerns about your child's mood or behavior, don't keep it a secret. Talking about it can save a life.

In the United States, one out of every five children suffers from a mental health disorder. Just like in adults, if these problems are recognized, they can be treated. Addressing the mental health needs of children can greatly improve their quality of life.

The key to success is to recognize problems early. But this does not happen in the majority of children in the United States. Many go for years before they are getting the treatment or therapy that they need. Even if you are not sure you child may have mental health needs, the most important step is to just talk about it.

The most common mental illnesses in children

- Anxiety disorders
- Depression and mood disorders
- Disruptive behavioral disorders
- Eating disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Tic disorders
- Learning and communication disorders
- Substance Use disorders
- Attention deficit disorders



Common concerns and solutions

“I’m embarrassed and uncomfortable about the problem”

Solution: This is a very common feeling. Sometimes parents blame themselves or feel these issues should remain private. Many parents hope their child will just “outgrow” the problem. But just like physical problems, mental health problems should be talked about early, so help can be started. Mental health professionals are used to seeing these issues and can put your concerns at ease.

“My child won’t go”

Solution: Be direct and honest with your child. Tell him/her that you are very concerned and keep a positive attitude while you do this. It might help to explain how the problem interferes with your child’s enjoyment of life.

“I don’t know where to start”

Solution: Talk with your child’s pediatrician, teacher, or guidance counselor today. They can direct you to the right resources.

“Children are the world’s most valuable resources and its best hope for the future”

John F Kennedy

Free Resources in Gainesville

Alachua County Crisis Hotline

352-264-6789

Available 24/7 for any child or family
In crisis

Alachua County Crisis Center Counseling

352-264-6789

Free counseling for children and
Families with any needs

CDS Family & Behavioral Services

352-334-3800

Free counseling and social services
for children and families

Interface Youth Shelter

352-334-3833

Free temporary housing with
counseling for children/teens with
school or family problems. Has
Social services available.

Meridian Behavioral Services

352-274-5600

Free counseling and psychiatry

Healthy Families Alachua County

352-394-4491

Free home visits and services for at
risk children and families