

What Are Childhood Mental Health Disorders?



Mental health in childhood means reaching developmental and emotional milestones, and learning healthy social skills and how to cope when there are problems. Mentally healthy children have a positive quality of life and can function well at home, in school, and in their communities.

Mental health difficulties among children are described as serious changes in the way children typically learn, behave, or handle their emotions, which cause distress and problems getting through the day. Many children occasionally have problems like fears and worries, or disruptive behaviours. If symptoms are severe and persistent, and interfere with school, home, or play activities, the child may be diagnosed with a mental health difficulty.

Among the more common mental disorders that can be diagnosed in childhood are Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Anxiety, and Behaviour Disorders.

Other childhood disorders and concerns that affect how children learn, behave, or handle their emotions can include learning and developmental disabilities, Autism, and risk factors like substance use and self-harm.



What are the symptoms of childhood mental problems?

Symptoms of mental disorders change over time as a child grows, and may include difficulties with how a child plays, learns, speaks, and acts or how the child handles their emotions. Symptoms often start in early childhood, although some disorders may develop during the teenage years. The diagnosis is often made in the school years and sometimes earlier. However, some children with a mental health problem may not be recognised or diagnosed as having one.

Can childhood mental health problems be treated?

Childhood mental disorders can be treated and managed. There are many treatment options based on the best and most current medical evidence, so parents and doctors should work closely with everyone involved in the child's treatment — teachers, coaches, therapists, and other family members. Taking advantage of all the resources available will help parents, health professionals, and educators guide the child towards success. Early diagnosis and appropriate services for children and their families can make a difference in the lives of children with mental disorders.



Reference:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
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