



Child & Adolescent | *Tip sheet*

Understanding Common Mental Health Disorders in Children

Children can have many of the same mental health conditions as adults. Their symptoms may look different, so it helps to know what to watch for. Below are seven common mental health disorders seen in children.

1. Anxiety Disorders

Children with anxiety disorders have strong fears or worries that are hard to control. These feelings can make it hard to play, learn or spend time with others. Types include social anxiety, generalized anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

2. Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Children with ADHD may have trouble paying attention. They may act before thinking or seem too active. Some children have one main symptom and others have a mix of these behaviors.

3. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

ASD is a developmental condition that begins in early childhood, often before age 3. Children with ASD may have trouble talking, reading social cues or connecting with others. Symptoms can be mild or more serious.

4. Eating Disorders

Eating disorders involve harmful thoughts and behaviors about food, weight and body shape. Disorders such as anorexia, bulimia and binge-eating can cause major health and emotional problems.

5. Depression and Other Mood Disorders

Depression causes lasting sadness, irritability or loss of interest in usual activities. It can make school and friendships hard. Bipolar disorder causes big mood swings between low moods and extreme highs. During these highs, children may act in unsafe or risky ways. Severe depression can lead some children to think about suicide.

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6. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

PTSD can develop after a child faces or sees violence, abuse, injury or another trauma. Symptoms may include fear, worry, upsetting memories, nightmares or acting out.

7. Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia affects how a person thinks and understands reality. It often begins in the late teen years or early adulthood. Children or young adults may see or hear things that are not there or have unusual thoughts or behaviors.

Getting Support

A child's mental health is a key part of their overall well-being. Finding the right care can feel overwhelming, but you do not have to do it alone. Lucet's care managers can help you understand your options and connect you to the support your child needs.

Sources: Mayo Clinic; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Reviewed by Care Manager, Clinical Operations, LCSW

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