

Early Signs of Mental Illness

Learn to recognize the early warning signs of mental illness.

Dr. Barbara Cornblatt, Ph.D., is a professor of psychiatry at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the wife of a *Dr. Phil* advisory board member, Dr. Lonnie Sherrod, Ph.D. As the director of the Recognition and Prevention Program (RAP), a specialty program aimed at identifying and treating adolescents and young adults with early signs of mental illness, she has created the following list of behaviors that could indicate that your child is at risk or in the early stages of schizophrenia.

People at risk often show behaviors such as:

- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Preferring to be alone
- A drop in school performance
- Seeming less motivated
- Appearing depressed
- A reduced ability to concentrate
- Changes in sleep or energy level
- Increased anxiety or agitation
- Irritability
- Moodiness

Other behaviors of particular concern are:

- Mistrustfulness or suspiciousness
- Changes in personal hygiene
- Emotions that do not fit the situation
- Vague speech
- Speech sometimes doesn't make sense
- Unusual ideas or beliefs
- Unusual experiences

TEENS AND MENTAL ILLNESS

Although teens and adolescents often suffer from the same mental health issues as adults, the reasons why they develop these disorders can often be quite different than older men and women. In addition, teens may withdraw from their family, but maintain friendships with their peers at school - making matters more complicated for identifying and treating the problem. For these reasons, teen mental health treatment programs must offer a unique take on treatment that speaks to the needs of young people. To put a child in a program geared towards adults is almost a guarantee that they will not get the most out of the program, or achieve wellness as a result of the treatment.

What are the Most Common Teen Mental Health Issues?

There are a number of teen mental illnesses that are much more common than years among young people age 12 - 19. These mental health issues include:

Depression

Anxiety

Bi-polar disorder

Borderline personality disorder

Schizophrenia

How is Teen Mental Health Treatment Different?

The counselors, therapists and other professionals who work in teen mental health programs are well-versed in the unique needs of young people, and understand the different root causes behind their disorders.

Among the most common reasons why teenagers develop mental health issues include:

Stress at home. If parents are fighting, going through a divorce or in constant conflict with their children, it is likely to manifest itself as a teen mental health issue. Kids who do not feel secure in their home environment (or, in a worst case scenario are the victim of physical or sexual abuse) may develop serious mental health problems as a result.

Self-image issues. The teen years are a time of insecurity and often young people will find themselves on the wrong end of self-esteem and self-image issues. Some teens, especially adolescent girls may slip into a deep depression if they feel inadequate in terms of their appearance or social standing. Junior high school and high school are periods when superficiality is the order of the day - which can be difficult for those teens who lack self-confidence.

Academic pressure. For some kids, the pressure to succeed at school can lead to the development of mental health issues. When teenagers feel as if they are letting their parents down or putting their future in jeopardy, depression and anxiety may soon follow.

Relationship issues. Teenagers fall in love easily, but without the experience or maturity of an adult, they will be prone to rash behavior in their relationships. When a boy or girl breaks up with a partner it may push them into a serious depression.

Teens and Depression

Depression is the most common mental health issue found in teenage boys and girls. Everything from school academic performance to issues involving puberty and social status can lead a teen into a downward spiral of depression. Some of the most common signs and symptoms of teen depression include:

Feeling of hostility or anger

Moodiness or sudden mood shifts

Loss of interest in once-pleasurable activities

Sudden changes in eating or sleeping habits

Fatigue or lack of energy

Helping a young person with depression can be tricky, as they tend to be extremely sensitive and defensive about their condition. Parents are urged to help their child with depression find a treatment program that understands the unique needs of young people.

Why is Teen Mental Health Treatment so Important?

There are a number of key reasons why teen mental health treatment is such an important area of the industry. Teens who suffer from depression, anxiety and other disorders are much more likely to turn to drug and alcohol as a means of self-medicating their symptoms than adults. This is a time when young people are experimenting with substance abuse, and adding mental health issues into the mix is a recipe for alcoholism or teen drug addiction.

Also, the teen years are indeed a formative time in the life of an individual. A mental health issue can impede the development of social skills or an educational track that leads to a bright future.

Finally, there is the potential ultimate price to be paid as a result of a teen mental illness: self-harming behavior or suicide. Allowing a teen's mental health problem to go unaddressed will push that individual deeper and deeper into the depression. Combine that with the impulsiveness of youth and you have a potentially deadly combination that has led many teenagers to do the unthinkable.

How can Parents Help?

Few parents would knowingly turn a blind eye to their child's mental health issues however some simply do not know how to recognize the signs and symptoms of these conditions. Step one for parents who suspect their child may be suffering from anxiety, depression or bipolar disorder is to learn the warning signs of these illnesses and watch their own children closely.

Second, parents need to make sure that the lines of communication with their kids are always open. Teenagers are not going to want to talk about their problems (this is simply the nature of the age group) but it is important for parents to remain undeterred. Ask the teenager how they are feeling. Talk to their teachers or school counselors if there is a problem. And most importantly never forget to tell the child how much you love them, and that you are there to support them no matter what they are going through.

Newport Academy understands the unique needs of teenagers who are suffering from mental health issues. This gender specific treatment facility helps young people and their families overcome debilitating issues that threaten their future.



Message*

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Early warning signs about children's mental illness not evident to many Canadian parents

Canada NewsWire

TORONTO, Oct. 3, 2011

Most parents take 'watch and wait' approach

TORONTO, Oct. 3, 2011 /CNW/ - More than half of Canadian parents (57 per cent) are concerned about the mental health of their children and most will simply monitor behaviours that can actually be early indicators of problems, rather than seek advice or treatment, according to a new RBC-Today's Parent survey of more than 2,500 Canadian parents on children's mental health.

The survey also showed a lack of awareness about children's mental health overall. More than two-thirds of parents (68 per cent) thought that attention deficit disorder is the most common children's mental health issue. In fact, anxiety is the most common mental health problem facing children and youth in Canada, followed by conduct disorders and attention deficit disorders.

"Most mental health problems start in childhood or adolescence, and the good news is that many children improve with early intervention and treatment, allowing them to get back to their regular activities and lead healthy lives," said Dr. David Wolfe, psychologist and RBC chair in Children's Mental Health at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. "It's absolutely crucial for parents, doctors and teachers to have a basic level of mental health IQ so they can recognize the warning signs if a child is struggling at an early age."

"It's possible that many parents don't know what warning signs to look for, which means their children could be suffering in silence without much-needed treatment," added Jamie Anderson, deputy chair of RBC Capital Markets and executive champion of the RBC Children's Mental Health Project. "Through the RBC Children's Mental Health Project, we want to help more parents become familiar with the early signs of mental health issues so we can collectively break down the barriers to early intervention and facilitate more effective and timely diagnosis and treatment."

A change in a child's behaviour can be an early warning sign of a mental health problem. Depending on the behaviour, approximately 17 to 27 per cent of parents would seek professional help immediately for their child, and a similar proportion would try to manage these situations on their own.

Parents identified the following as their top warning signs for which they would seek professional help:

- Repeated risky behaviour (59 per cent)
- Bed-wetting beyond age six (43 per cent)
- Lack of energy (27 per cent)
- Regular anxiety about school (24 per cent)
- Aggressive behaviour (22 per cent)
- Repetitive behaviour (17 per cent)
- Frequent displays of temper (17 per cent)
- Inattentiveness (10 per cent)
- Excessive shyness (six per cent)

When asked with whom they would discuss their child's mental health situation, 85 per cent of parents would opt for their family doctor and 53 per cent would talk to a family member. In addition, more than three-quarters of respondents (77 per cent) would turn to the internet for information, but did not necessarily trust what they read (only 11 per cent ranked the internet as the most trusted source). Alternately, parents considered doctors (78 per cent) and health-related organizations (61 per cent) to be among their top two most-trusted sources of information.

Compounding the problem for those parents that do act on their suspicions of children's mental illness is the lengthy wait time for a formal diagnosis and treatment. Of parents surveyed with a child who was diagnosed with a mental illness, it took an average of two years from the first warning signs until their child was officially diagnosed. For 22 per cent of parents, it took more than three years.

Stigma still a barrier

One significant barrier to early intervention, diagnosis and treatment is stigma. While many parents believe that mental illness in children can be treated, there is widespread concern about stigmatization due to mental illness. Respondents believed that other parents (80 per cent) and children (86 per cent) stigmatize children with mental health conditions.

Nearly seven-in-ten (69 per cent) prefer to obtain information on children's mental health anonymously so their child would not be "labeled" or "stigmatized", even though 79 per cent of parents feel that mental illness is a disease like any other. When asked how they would respond if their child was diagnosed with a mental illness:

- 26 per cent would not want anyone outside of their immediate family to know
- 25 per cent said that they would feel embarrassed if people found out, with 31 per cent of those parents insisting that it is a personal and private matter
- 21 per cent worried others would consider them a bad parent.

While many parents in the study expressed progressive views on mental health, they did not trust other people to think the same way. "Parents want to protect their child from the judgments and prejudices of others," said Anderson. "Sometimes overcoming stigma can be as big a challenge as getting a diagnosis. This fear may prevent parents from seeking help and could delay or hinder necessary treatment for their child."

Other key highlights from survey include:

Among parents with children who had been diagnosed with a mental illness, their most common reaction was relief (40 per cent). Other reactions included: fear (16 per cent); denial (seven per cent); frustration (six per cent); and guilt (six per cent).

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- Mothers were more likely than fathers to look to friends (35 per cent versus 26 per cent) and teachers (42 per cent versus 35 per cent), while fathers are more likely than mothers to turn to professionals such as psychiatrists (26 per cent versus 14 per cent) or faith representatives (seven per cent versus two per cent) when looking to discuss their child's situation.
- Younger parents (age 18 to 34) are more likely than parents aged 35 and older to reach out to other parents (41 per cent versus 33 per cent) and family members (66 per cent versus 50 per cent) regarding their child's mental health condition.
- Older parents (age 55+) are more likely than their younger counterparts to turn to a professional, like a social worker (22 per cent versus 13 per cent) regarding their child's mental health condition.

These findings are part of an online survey of 2,556 parents conducted by the Rogers Connect Marketing Research Group and commissioned by the RBC Children's Mental Health Project and Today's Parent Magazine from July 11 to August 11, 2011. The results reflect the opinions of Canadian parents with children aged 18 and younger. The margin of error for the full data set—which measures sampling variability—is ± 1.9 per cent, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

About the RBC Children's Mental Health Project

The RBC Children's Mental Health Project is a multi-year philanthropic commitment to support community-based and hospital programs that reduce stigma, provide early intervention and increase public awareness about children's mental health issues. Since 2009, the RBC Children's Mental Health Project has donated more than \$6.5 million to more than 125 organizations across Canada. Grant applications are accepted year-round from eligible organizations. For more information, visit www.rbc.com/childrensmentalhealth.

Read more: <http://digitaljournal.com/pr/439826#ixzz1fD1cgXNE>

Mental Health; Bounce Back From Adversity, Trauma, And Stress

According to the dictionary **Mental Health is "the psychological state of someone who is functioning at a satisfactory level of emotional and behavioral adjustment."** It has everything to do with how you feel about yourself, the quality of your relationships, how you control your feelings and deal with your problems.



Mental health issues are very common in the youth society today. I truly agree that it is somewhat tough been a teen. With the many physical, emotional, psychological and social changes that accompany this stage of life; we often find ourselves stressed out while trying to maintain a good balance between our goals, school, family, relationships, etc., whereas still trying to enjoy our teenage years. While in the process of growing up, you need to learn how to control your emotions and behavior or it will likely control you. By doing this; you will eventually build strong relationships, handle life's inevitable challenges, lead productive and fulfill life:)

While many teenagers often focus on their mental and emotional health only when they develop a mental health issue, it requires effort to maintain a healthy mental and emotional health just as it requires the same principle to build or maintain a physical health. The more time and energy you invest in doing this, the more power you will have over controlling any mental health issues thrown your way.

These issues will likely bounce back and you could move on. Am not saying that being emotionally and mentally healthy eliminates all the problems you are or will be facing in the near future. It doesn't mean that you won't go through a few rough times every now and then. We all go through a series of problems every so often. It's a part of life.

While all these normal part of living problems can cause discomfort, unhappiness, stress, and anxiety; the difference is that people with a healthier mental health can handle these tough moments much better than those who lack mental health. They have the ability to bounce back from adversity, trauma, and stress. This ability is called also **Resilience**.

According to the Wikipedia.org "**Resilience**" in psychology is *the positive capacity of people to cope with stress and adversity. This coping may result in the individual "bouncing back" to a previous state of normal functioning, or using the experience of exposure to adversity to produce a "steeling effect" and function better than expected (much like an inoculation gives one the capacity to cope well with future exposure to disease)* Resilience is most commonly understood as a process, and not a trait of an individual.

Coping with mental health issues can be difficult. But once you build **Resilience**. You build mental health. Teens with a good mental health have resilience ability. They can remain focused, flexible, and maintain a positive outlook in bad moments as well as good ones. They are able to balance and express their emotions while mentioning self confidence and high self-esteem.

Building Your Resilience

"Resilience involves maintaining flexibility and balance in your life as you deal with stressful circumstances and traumatic events. This happens in several ways, including:

- Letting yourself experience strong emotions, and also realizing when you may need to avoid experiencing them at times in order to continue functioning.
- Stepping forward and taking action to deal with your problems and meet the demands of daily living, and also stepping back to rest and reenergize yourself.
- Spending time with loved ones to gain support and encouragement, and also nurturing yourself.
- Relying on others, and also relying on yourself."

Source: American Psychological Association and <http://helpguide.org/>



Balance Between Physical And Mental Health

“You may be wondering how staying physically active can help your mental health. Well; mind-body interaction happens on a daily basis. If your body is healthy, than there's

a better chance that your brain will also be healthy. This in turn will boost your self-esteem, mood, and overall mental state.

Your mind and body is linked together. When you improve your physical health, you'll automatically experience greater mental and emotional well-being. "For example, exercise not only strengthens our heart and lungs, but also releases endorphins, powerful chemicals that energize us and lift our mood."

Try to get at least 30 minutes of exercise everyday.

Exercise helps to bring blood and oxygen to your brain, which helps to improve memory, reasoning, and reaction times. Studies have shown that even exercising 3 times a day for ten minute intervals can provide you with great mind enhancement. Keeping physically fit will also help to ward off heart problems like heart attack, stroke, and hypertension. Heart problems can drastically affect your brain function, as it is the heart that supplies the brain with nutrients. So if you want your memory to last a long time, look after that heart as well!

Maintain a Balanced Diet

A balanced diet can go a long way to improving both how your brain functions and how you feel about yourself. Keep your mind active by eating lots of carbohydrates. Your brain gets all of its energy from glucose, a sugar it needs to take from carbohydrates. Wholegrain breads and cereals will give your brain the energy needed to remember, make decisions, and think. Carbohydrates are also a great way to improve your mood. They help to boost serotonin levels in the brain, which are responsible for monitoring mood.

It is important to maintain a low-fat, low-cholesterol diet in order to keep your heart and blood vessels healthy. This type of diet can also help to address numerous mental health issues. Your brain relies on your blood vessels in order to supply it with nutrients, so if they are all clogged up your brain just can't function well. Try to eat lots of fruits and veggies too, especially those with antioxidants. Antioxidants help to keep your brain cells healthy and prevent your arteries from

clogging. Try colorful fruits and vegetables like blueberries, oranges, and spinach.

It is also a good idea to reduce your alcohol intake. Alcohol acts as a depressant, and it can leave you down in the dumps. It is also responsible for causing serious damage to your brain when taken in large quantities.

Exercise Your Mind

Many of us exercise our bodies to stay fit, but we tend to ignore the fact that our brains need exercise too! Simple mind puzzles like crosswords or word searches, cards, or Trivial Pursuit can keep your mind in tip-top shape. Try reading the newspaper every morning or tuning into the nightly news for a quick mental health treatment. Taking a class, whether it is Shakespeare Appreciation or pottery, can also keep your mind feeling fresh and active. Simple changes like taking up a new hobby or having a conversation with your coworker can also stimulate the brain. Research shows that these mental exercises can help reduce memory loss by up to 50%.



Reduce Your Stress

Life can be pretty hectic sometimes and we often fail to realize how much stress we are actually under. Stress can affect our mood, memory, and mind development, so it's a good idea to reduce stress whenever possible. When you experience stress, you release special hormones that get your body to perform certain actions. Long-term or chronic stress can cause too many of these hormones to enter your system. This can kill special cells in your brain responsible for laying down new memories or accessing old information.

To reduce stress, practice deep breathing exercises. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. This will help to regulate your heartbeat and keep you focused. Listening to music at home or at the office will also keep you calm and on task. Cut back on the amount of caffeine and nicotine that you ingest; these

work as stimulants in your body, and can often make stress even worse. Some of the best stress relievers are things that you can do at home. Take a relaxing bath or shower, or make time for your favorite television show. Writing in a journal for even fifteen minutes a day can also help you to get out all those pent up emotions.

Increase your Self-Esteem

Maintaining a healthy self-esteem is integral to your mental health. It has everything to do with [loving yourself, body and accepting who you are](#). Low self-esteem has been linked to mood disorders, [eating disorders](#), drug and alcohol abuse, and chronic fatigue. It can also increase your stress levels and make it difficult to function at work or at school. A person with healthy self-esteem realizes both her strengths and her weaknesses. She is able to accept herself for who she is and realizes that she is a worthwhile person. Many people are simply unable to recognize their achievements and self-value. Improving your self-esteem can go miles to lifting your mood, improving your mental ability, and your enjoyment of life. It can be difficult to improve your self-esteem, it can take years to come to realize who you are and that you are important. But you can begin by following these three tips:



- Don't listen to the negative messages you give yourself. Rephrase those negative comments to make them positive.
- Take care of yourself. Eat well, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep. Make time for things that you find enjoyable.
- Reward yourself for a job well done. Remember your achievements.
- Ask for support. Improving your mental health sometimes means seeking help from others. Talk with your family, friends, or get some mental health counseling to help you improve your self-esteem