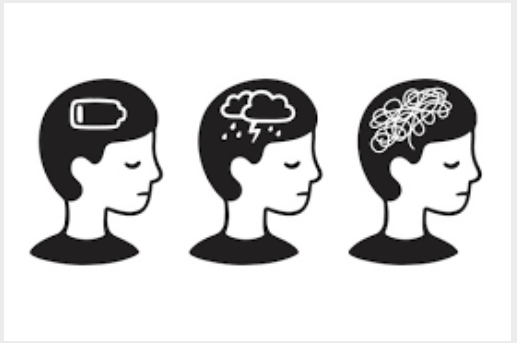
Mental Health In Children & Adolescents



Stephanie Domnitz, LCSW

Care Plus NJ - School Based Clinical Program Manager

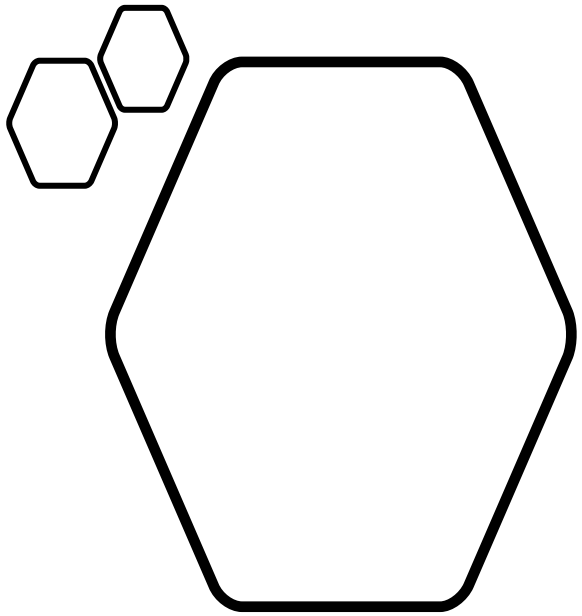
CarePlus NEW JERSEY

Objectives of this training

1. Develop awareness of the prevalence of mental health disorders
2. Identify symptoms and warning signs of children and adolescent mental health challenges
3. Understand the risks associated with mental health issues
4. Learn strategies for effectively addressing mental health issues in your children
5. Know when and where to turn for help

Mental Health

- What is Mental Health?
  - *Emotional, psychological, and social well-being*.
  - It affects how we *think, feel, and act*.
  - It also helps determine *how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.*
  - Mental health is important at *every stage of life*, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.



- Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, your *thinking, mood, and behavior* could be affected.
- Many factors contribute to mental health problems including:
  - Biological factors: such as genes or brain chemistry
  - Life experiences: such as trauma or abuse
  - Family history of mental health problems

MENTAL HEALTH and YOUTH

13%

OF CHILDREN

ages 8-15 experience a mental health condition

50%

OF CHILDREN

ages 8-15 experiencing a mental health condition don't receive treatment

13-20%

OF CHILDREN

living in the U.S.



(1 out of 5 children) experience a mental health condition in a given year

17%

OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

seriously consider suicide

1/2

OF ALL LIFETIME CASES

of mental illness begin by age

14

Despite effective treatments there are long delays—sometimes decades—between onset of symptoms and treatment

Source: National Institute of Mental Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

NAMI

National Alliance on Mental Illness

What are the common mental health disorders in children ?

- 9.4% of children aged 2-17 years (approximately 6.1 million) have received an ADHD diagnosis
- 7.4% of children aged 3-17 years (approximately 4.5 million) have a diagnosed behavior problem
- 7.1% of children aged 3-17 years (approximately 4.4 million) have diagnosed anxiety.
- 3.2% of children aged 3-17 years (approximately 1.9 million) have diagnosed depression.

1 in 6 U.S. children aged 2–8 years (17.4%) had a diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder.

Why focus on youth mental health?

- Mental health problems are ***common*** and often develop *by age 14*
- The *sooner* an individual gets help, the more likely they are to have a *positive outcome*
- *Youth* experience mental health problems ***differently than adults***
- Youth may not be well informed
- ***Stigma***: misunderstanding and discrimination are often associated with mental health problems

Mental Health and COVID19

*Uncertainty

*Social isolation

*Nervousness

*Worries

*Loneliness

*Difficulties concentrating

*Irritability

*Boredom

*Restlessness

***Increased risk for depression and anxiety**



What impact has this had on you?


71% say the pandemic has taken a toll on the mental health of at least one of their children

What is a mental disorder?

- A mental disorder or mental illness is a diagnosable illness that affects how a person is thinking, feeling, and behaving *(& their Body)*
- These disorders disrupt the person's ability to
    - Work or attend school
    - Carry out daily activities
    - Engage in satisfying relationships

How do I know what's normal and what may be a sign of a mental health problem?

- Examine the impact of change…. Is the youth struggling…
  - In school
  - In social settings
  - In daily activities
- Symptoms of a mental illness can often appear similar to normal development during adolescence

“Normal” Stages vs. Warning Signs

Examine the severity of change

Normal Adolescence	Potential Warning Sign
Withdrawing from family to spend more time with friends	Withdrawing from friends, family and social activity
Wanting more privacy	Becoming secretive; need for privacy seems to be hiding something
Moving from childhood likes to teen pursuits	Losing interest in favorite activities and not replacing with other pursuits

What am I looking for?
Signs & Symptoms

- ***Signs*** are what we see.
- ***Symptoms*** are what a person experiences.
- We usually categorize signs and symptoms as thoughts, feelings, behaviors & the body.

Physical Signs and Symptoms

- **Cardiovascular**: pounding heart, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, blushing
- **Respiratory**: fast breathing, shortness of breath
- **Neurological**: dizziness, headache, sweating, tingling, numbness
- **Gastrointestinal**: choking, dry mouth, stomach pains, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- **Musculoskeletal**: muscle aches and pains, restlessness, tremors and shaking, inability to relax
- **Hormonal**: irregular menstrual cycle, loss of sexual desire
- Changes in normal patterns: **overeating** or **not eating at all**, weight gain or loss, **sleeping much more or much less**, feeling fatigued

Emotional Signs and Symptoms

- Sadness
- Anxiety; unrealistic or excessive worry
- Guilt
- Irritability or anger
- Mood swings
- Lack of emotion/emotional response
- Unusual perceptions or reactions
- Helplessness or hopelessness
- Oversensitivity to comments/criticism
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of inhibition

Thoughts Signs and Symptoms

- Frequent self-criticism or self-blame
- Pessimism
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Indecisiveness or confusion
- Rigid thinking
- Racing thoughts
- Tendency to believe others see one in a negative light
- Altered sense of self
- Delusions or hallucinations
- Odd ideas; lack of insight
- Suspiciousness
- Thoughts of death and suicide

Behaviors Signs and Symptoms

- Crying spells
- Aggression towards others
- Withdrawal from others
- Neglect of responsibilities
- Loss of interest in personal appearance
- Loss of motivation
- Slow movement
- Use of drugs and alcohol
- Changes in energy level
- Obsessive or compulsive behavior
- Avoidance or phobic behavior
- Showing distress
- Talking rapidly

5 warning signs of common mental health disorders in childhood/adolescence

1. **Long-lasting mood swings**

    -A change in mood that lasts for two weeks

    -Mood swings usually range from **being hyperactive to being melancholy** within a short time span with no substantial reason

2. **Excessive fears or worries**

    -Normal aged-based fears become so excessive that they **interfere with a child's daily functions**

3. **Extreme behavioral changes**

    -Defiance for the sake of defiance

    -Drastic changes in behavior or personality

    -Fighting frequently, using weapons, expressing a desire to badly hurt others

Warning signs continued

4. **Physical changes, such as weight gain or loss**

    -A **sudden change in physical appearance** that does not follow puberty

    -Weight loss brought on by **lack of appetite** may be an early sign of depression

5. **Lack of concentration**

    -**Trouble focusing or sitting still**

    -The inability **to concentrate on a simple task** can be a symptom of ADHD or depression.

    -May cause **disruption** to academic and social life

How do I start the conversation?

- Ask how the child is feeling
- Note what you've seen (be specific about the verbal or non verbal behavior)
- Express genuine concern (not criticism or judgment)
- Don't focus initially on changing the person's behavior, perspective or symptom
- Use "I" statements that are not accusatory
  - I feel _____
  - When _____
  - Because _____

First Step: Talking about it

- Acknowledge that it is okay to be sad or worried (or whatever troubling emotion you think your child may be feeling)
- Create an open communication between you and your child about what they are feeling and encourage them to express this to you in a safe place
- The goal is NOT to eliminate your child's anxiety or depression, but to help them learn to cope with it
  - *Do*: encourage them to learn/utilize coping skills
  - *Do NOT*: Try to remove all stressors that trigger their anxiety

Helping Children Cope (Preschool Age)

REACTIONS

- Fear of being alone, **bad dreams**
- Speech difficulties
- Loss of bladder/bowel control, constipation, bed-wetting
- **Change in appetite**
- Increased temper tantrums, whining, or **clinging behaviors**

Helping Children Cope (Preschool Age)

How to help

- **Patience** and tolerance
- Provide reassurance (verbal and physical)
- Encourage expression through **play, reenactment, story-telling**
- Allow **short-term** changes in sleep arrangements
- Plan calming, comforting activities before bedtime
- Maintain regular family routines and schedules
- **Incorporate** coping strategies into daily family routines

Helping Children Cope (School Aged 6-12)

REACTIONS

- **Irritability**, whining, aggressive behavior
- Clinging, **nightmares**
- Sleep/appetite disturbance
- Physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches)
- Withdrawal from peers, **loss of interest**
- Competition for parents' attention
- Forgetfulness about chores and new information learned at school

Helping Children Cope (School Aged 6-12)

How to help

- Label and model emotions and appropriate emotional expression
- Participate in **structured household chores**
- Set **gentle but firm limits**
- Encourage expression through play and conversation
- Help family create ideas for enhancing health promotion behaviors and maintaining family routines
- Collaborate with **teachers, coaches, and loved ones** who also have a relationship with your child and discuss supports available
- Address **any stigma or discrimination** occurring and clarify misinformation

Helping Children Cope (Adolescent 13-18)

REACTIONS

- Physical symptoms (**headaches**, rashes, etc.)
- Sleep/appetite disturbance
- Agitation or **decrease in energy**, apathy
- Ignoring health promotion behaviors
- **Isolating** from peers and loved ones
- Concerns about **stigma and injustices**
- Avoiding/cutting school

Helping Children Cope (Adolescent 13-18)

How to help

- Patience, **tolerance, and reassurance**
- Encourage your child to brainstorm solutions and then implement them independently
- Discuss and explore healthy relationships
- Remind them of supports available to them outside of the home
- Encourage physical activities
- Connect with them in activities they are interested in
- Healthy eating habits
- Meet them where they are
- Model healthy coping strategies





- You need to make your **own mental health a priority**

- Your children can not and will not stay safe and calm if you are NOT!

Tips for helping to reduce anxiety/ depression in the home

- Have realistic expectations of your children
- Let them learn to do things on their own
- Help your child to understand and express feelings in a healthy way
- Stay calm when your child begins to experience anxiety/depression
- Recognize and praise small accomplishments and efforts
- Plan for transitions
- Be open to talking with your children about these feelings – create a safe place
- Model self-care
- Focus on the positives

Things to note...

- Relaxing activities are very important where your child can play, paint, do yoga, or just be a kid with no expectations
- Sleep routine and diet can significantly impact anxiety
- If your child has difficultly talking about what's making them worry, give them the option to draw or write about it
- Help them go from "What if" to "What is"
- Teach them to challenge their negative thoughts

Critical Coping Strategies to Teach Kids

www.thepathway2success.com

Deep Breathing



Journal Writing



Using Positive Self-Talk



Practicing Gratitude



Mindful Coloring



Clipart by Kate Hadfield & Sarah Pecorino

Writing a List of Choices



Exercising



50 Coping Skills



Children who use coping skills to calm themselves down can then problem-solve without their emotions getting in the way.

1. Exercise (running, walking, etc.).
2. Write (poetry, stories, journal).
3. Scribble/doodle on paper.
4. Be with other people.
5. Go see a movie.
6. Do a word search or crossword.
7. Do schoolwork.
8. Play a musical instrument.
9. Sing.
10. Let yourself cry.
11. Play with a pet.
12. Clean something.
13. Read a good book.
14. Listen to music.
15. Meditate.
16. Write a letter or send an email.
17. Plan your dream room (colors/furniture).
18. Dance.
19. Take up a new hobby.
20. Look up recipes, cook a meal.
21. Create or build something.
22. Make a list of blessings in your life.
23. Go to a friend's house.
24. Contact a hotline/therapist.
25. Talk to someone close to you.
26. Stretch.
27. Sort through your photographs.
28. Start collecting something.
29. Play video/computer games.
30. Perform a random act of kindness for someone.
31. Text or call an old friend.
32. Write yourself an "I love you because..." letter.
33. Look up new words and use them.
34. Yoga.
35. Clean your room/closet.
36. Learn a new language.
37. Hug a friend or family member.
38. Search online for new songs/artists.
39. Make a list of goals for the week/month/year/5 years.
40. Face paint.
41. Give yourself a facial.
42. Try some aromatherapy (candle, lotion, room spray).
43. Go somewhere very public.
44. Bake cookies.
45. Hug a pillow or stuffed animal.
46. Make hot chocolate, milkshake or a smoothie.
47. Build a pillow fort.
48. Play with modeling clay or Play-Dough.
49. Pray
50. Smile at least five people.

BOYS TOWN

boystown.org/parenting

Additional Coping Strategies

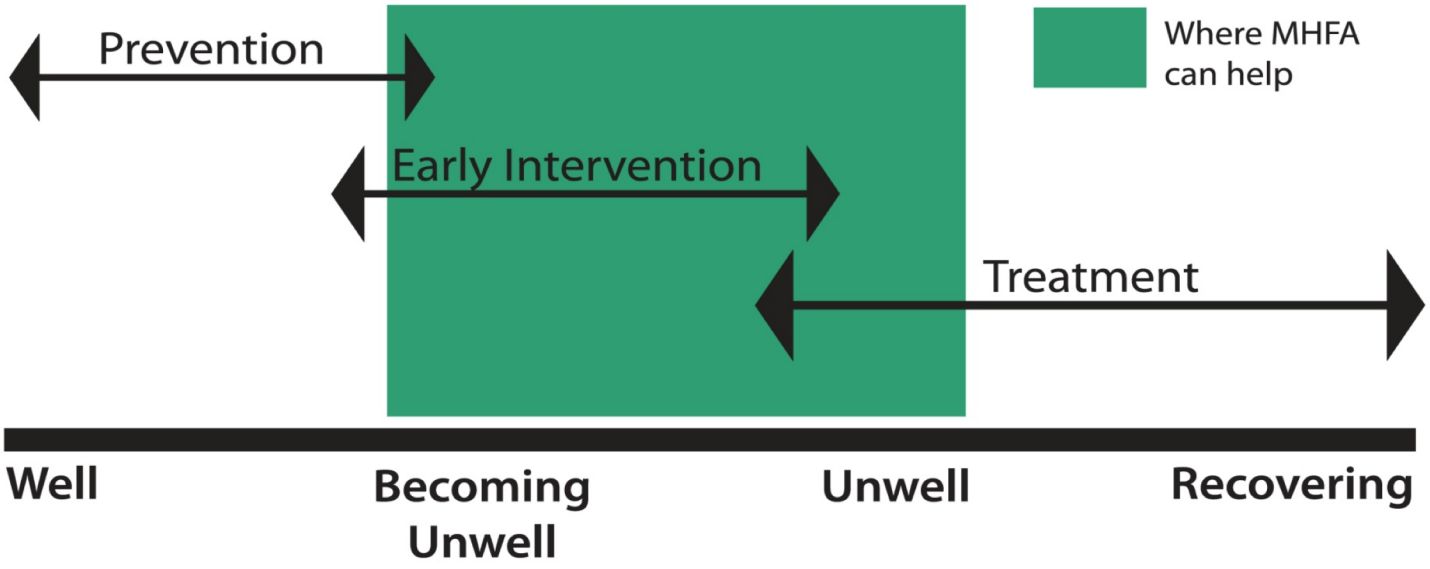
- Deep breathing/belly breathing
- Transitional object (stuffed animal, worry stone, squishy stress ball)
- Positive self-talk statements
- Calming visualizations
- Worry jar/worry journal
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Talking to the feelings (anxiety/depression)
- Physical activity/distraction

"FEEL"

- *F* REEZE – pause and do some deep breathing with your child
- *E* MPATHIZE – your child wants to hear that you understand and feel validated
- *E* VALUTE – once your child has been able to calm down, it is important to identify what may have triggered the anxiety and/or depression and how they were able to calm down
- *L* ET GO – let go of your guilt! You are doing an amazing job and giving your child the tools to manage their anxiety

When should you seek help?

Spectrum of Mental Health Interventions



Spectrum of mental health interventions from wellness to mental disorders and through to recovery, showing the contribution of MHFA

MHFA = Mental Health First Aid U.S.A.

What types of crises could occur when someone is experiencing a mental health problem?

Youth may be at risk for a variety of crisis situations:

- Suicide or suicidal thoughts
- Non-suicidal self-injury (cutting, burning)
- Medical emergencies
- Extreme distress
- Aggression

How common is suicidal thinking and behavior amongst youth?

- About 38,000 people die by suicide annually in the U.S.
- Currently, suicide is the **3rd leading cause** of death for young people ages 10 to 24
- Every year about 12,000 children 5-14 are admitted to psychiatric hospitals for suicidal behavior

Why are youth a high risk group for suicide and other mental health crises?

- Impulsivity
- Lack of awareness of risk involved
- Lack of awareness of time
- Use of alcohol or other drugs
- Influence of peer groups

Who do I call?

- ***In a LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY….call 911!***

- For NON-life threatening situations, Contact ***PerformCare***
- For parents, guardians, youth, and providers **24 hours a day, seven days a week**

  1-877-652-7624

  http://performcarenj.org/video/CSOC2018_1080p.mp4

When to call PerformCare….and what happens next?

- For a youth who are experiencing a ***non-life threatening*** behavioral or emotional **CRISIS:**
  - Parents/Guardian calls **PerformCare** to request Children's Mobile Response and Stabilization System at 1-877-652-7625
  - Visit **within 24 hours**
- For a youth who is NOT in immediate crisis, but is having a mental health problem, or has just asked for help:
  - Call **PerformCare** for a referral to an in-home Needs Assessment or to a local community mental health center
  - Visit usually in **72 hours to 1 week**

Children's Mobile Response

- If your child is experiencing a non-life threatening emotional or behavioral health crisis, PerformCare will link you to *Children's Mobile Response and Stabilization System*.
- This service provides:
  - In community response ***within 1 hour***
    - As arranged with parent…can be "delayed" up to 24 hours by parent request
  - ***Free of charge*** services to families
  - Crisis intervention
  - Stabilization through linkage to and monitoring of services. Services may be *in-home* if indicated.
  - Aftercare planning and linkage

Children's Mobile Response & Crisis Stabilization System

24-Hour/7 Days a Week Crisis Intervention and Stabilization for Children and Youth

Children's Mobile responds to the needs of children and families in crisis in Bergen County. It strives to maintain children in safe and stable living arrangements by providing interventions designed to stabilize and improve relationships within the family while also addressing areas of stress.

Program Goals: Maintain children in safe and stable living arrangements in the community, thereby reducing the need for out-of-home placement or psychiatric hospitalization.

The Specialized Services of the Program Include…

- Response to site of crisis within 1 hour
- Crisis de-escalation and safety assessment
- Treatment planning
- Provision and management of stabilization services for 8 weeks
- Discharge planning, including referral for ongoing services in the community as needed

To make a referral or for help, call 877-652-7624

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Coping skills and strengths developed in childhood carry into adult life, helping individuals reach their full potential.

With this in mind, we strive to deliver programming and resources that assist individuals in navigating our complicated world.

Calling for professional help

Types of professionals

- Doctors (pediatricians/primary care physicians)
- Nurse practitioners
- Psychiatrists and other mental health professionals
- Drug and alcohol specialists
- School counselors
- Nutrition experts
- Certified peer specialists

Types of professional help

- “Talk” therapy
- Brief intervention or therapy
- Problem-solving skills training
- Family or group therapy
- Parent Management training
- Withdrawal management
- Dietary management
- Academic and social counseling
- Medication

Community Mental Health Center

Your local mental health centers offer a variety of services, including

*individual, family and group counseling

*parenting training/support

*psychiatry/medication monitoring

When you call, be prepared to provide information

*Your concerns for your child, contact information, child's insurance, the insured's info, and also availability to schedule appointments.

*It can be helpful to bring records regarding school, past mental health and/or medical treatment, custody to the first appointment (not mandatory).

Care Plus Admissions 201.986.5000

Important Phone Numbers

- Psychiatric Emergency Screening Program: 201-262-HELP
- PerformCare/Children's Mobile: 1-877-652-7624
- CarePlus Admissions: 201-986-5000
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: www.afsp.org
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK; www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- The Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386; www.thetrevorproject.org
- 2nd Floor Helpline of NJ: 1-888-222-2228; http://2ndfloor.org
- NJ Hopeline: 1-855-654-6735; http://njhopeline.com
- Mental Health First Aid U.S.A.: www.nationalcouncil.org

Apps that are helpful for children

- Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame Street
- Moshi Kids: sleep and meditation
- Dreamy kid: guided meditations
- Manatee & Me: courses for children and parents on navigating anxiety, depression, ADHD, and stress
- Positive penguins: Helping children understand emotions
- Calm kids
- Breathe kids
- Headspace
- Happy me: mood tracking and journaling
- Smiling mind: mindfulness
- Mindshift CBT

Helpful links!

National Mental Health Association

- http://www.nmha.org

Anxiety Disorders Association of America

- www.adaa.org

Anxiety BC – resources for children and parents

- https://www.anxietybc.com/resources/video/children

Child Mind – helpful tips for what to do and not do when children are anxious

- https://childmind.org/article/what-to-do-and-not-do-when-children-are-anxious/

Guided breathing meditation for youth

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvF9AEe-ozc

Deep breathing exercise for youth

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uxbdx-SeOOo

More Resources/Links

- https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about.html
- https://www.webmd.com/depression/guide/teen-depression#1
- https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/6248-anxiety-disorders-in-children--adolescents
- https://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/educators
- https://schoolleadersnow.weareteachers.com/student-mental-health/
- https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/NAMI-Programs/NAMI-Ending-the-Silence
- https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Keith_Herman2/publication/232530831_Supporting_Children%27s_Mental_Health_in_Schools_Teacher_Perceptions_of_Needs_Roles_and_Barriers/links/5453e7da0cf26d5090a5537c.pdf
- https://www.ilispa.org/assets/docs/ResourceLibrary/Katharine%20Schmidt_De-escalation%20Techniques%20to%20Use%20With%20Students1.pdf

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- https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/middle2.html
- https://www.medicalhomeportal.org/living-with-child/mental-health/apps-to-help-kids-and-teens-with-anxiety

Questions/Comments

