

Adolescents and Mental Health

PARENT GUIDE - AGES 13-19



Potential WARNING Signs

If your child is experiencing these symptoms consider seeking help.

- Lost interest in things they once enjoyed
- Low energy/sleeping too much/too little
- Isolated socially/avoids social Interactions
- Fears weight gain and/or diets and exercises obsessively
- Engages in self-harm behaviors
- Increase in drug/alcohol use
- Has thoughts of suicide
- Difficulty concentrating
- Decreased academic performance
- Attempts to say goodbye
- Researching ways to harm themselves or obtain weapons
- Acting irritable, anxious or reckless

Do not wait for symptoms to appear to begin conversations about mental wellness. Inform your child of the warning signs. Encourage strategies for healthy living.

NOTE: if a child's behavior is unsafe or if a child talks about wanting to hurt themselves and/or others
SEEK HELP IMMEDIATELY

How to Start The Conversation

1. **Set up a time & place**—Pick a comfortable, relaxed time to talk with your child
2. **Be Direct**—Let them know you've been noticing a change in their behavior in a nonjudgemental way
3. **Listen**—Listen carefully to their response and look for any warning signs
4. **Respond Empathetically**—Emphasize that you want to support your child

Tips for Conversation

1. **Be a good listener**—let your child explain how they are feeling without passing judgement
2. **Be Honest**—talk with your child candidly and openly
3. **Be Compassionate**—let your child know that you recognize and respect their feelings
4. **Be Patient**—give your child enough time and space so they feel comfortable talking to you

Community Resources

- Your child's pediatrician
- Psychiatric Intake Response Center (PIRC) at Children's Hospital—513-636-4124
- Find a mental health professional—www.mindpeacecincinnati.org
- Mental Health Access Point (MHAP)—www.mentalhealthaccesspoint.org • 513-558-8888
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline • 800-273-8255
- Crisis Text Line: Text "START" to 741-741

Educational Resources

- 1N5—1N5.org
 - Resources for parents
 - Resources for students
 - Video stories
 - Resources to deal with Covid-19
- National Institute of Mental Illness—nimh.nih.gov
- Child Mind Institute—childmind.org
- Mental Health America—mhnational.org
- NAMI—nami.org
- Cincinnati Children's Medical Center—Adapting for Life Program—cincinnatichildrens.org/service/a/suicide-awareness
- Nationwide Children's Hospital—On Our Sleeves—nationwidechildrens.org/giving/on-our-sleeves

