



Mental health is a way of describing psychological, social and emotional wellbeing.

Your child needs good mental health to develop well, build strong relationships, adapt to change and deal with life's challenges.



- Pre-teens and teenagers who have good mental health often:
- feel happier and more positive about themselves and enjoy life
- bounce back from upsets and disappointments
- have healthier relationships with family and friends
- do physical activity and eat a healthy diet
- get involved in activities
- have a sense of achievement
- can relax and get a good night's sleep
- feel like they belong to their communities.

Signs pre-teens and teenagers might need help with mental health

For children younger than 12 years, mental health warning signs might include:

- sadness a lot of the time
- a drop in school performance
- aches and pains that don't go away quickly
- loss of appetite or being picky with food
- consistently aggressive, threatening, destructive, angry or violent behavior
- sleep problems, including nightmares.

For children 12 years and older, watch out for your child:

- seeming down, feeling things are hopeless, being tearful or lacking motivation
- showing sudden changes in behavior, often for no obvious reason
- having trouble eating or sleeping.
- saying they have physical pain – for example, headache, stomach ache or backache
- being aggressive or antisocial – for example, missing school, getting into trouble with the police, fighting or stealing
- being very anxious about weight or physical appearance, losing weight or failing to gain weight as they grow.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION



Your love and support and a strong relationship with you can have a direct and positive influence on your child's mental health. It can even reduce the chances of your child experiencing mental health problems.

- Here are ideas to promote your child's mental health and wellbeing:
- Show love, affection and care for your child in ways that your child likes – for example, your child might like hugs, smiles, pats on the back or quiet time together.
- Show that you're interested in what's happening in your child's life. Praise your child's efforts as well as their good points and achievements.
- Enjoy spending time together, one on one with your child and also as a family.
- Encourage your child to talk about feelings with you. It's important for your child to feel they don't have to go through things on their own. I
- Talk to trusted family members, friends, other parents or teachers if you have any concerns. If you feel you need more help, speak to your GP or another health professional.

