

Mental Health Warning Signs

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIH)

Older children and adolescents may benefit from an evaluation if they:

- Have lost interest in things that they used to enjoy.
- Have low energy.
- Sleep too much or too little or seem sleepy throughout the day.
- Spend more and more time alone and avoid social activities with friends or family.
- Diet or exercise excessively, or fear gaining weight.
- Engage in self-harm behaviors (such as cutting or burning their skin)
- Smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs.
- Engage in risky or destructive behavior alone or with friends.
- Have thoughts of suicide.
- Have periods of highly elevated energy and activity and require much less sleep than usual.
- Say that they think someone is trying to control their mind or that they hear things that other people cannot hear.

Mental illnesses can be treated. If you are a child or teen, talk to your parents, school counselor, or health care provider. If you are a parent and need help starting a conversation with your child or teen about mental health, find [resources for families](#) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. If you are unsure where to go for help, ask your pediatrician or family doctor or visit [NIMH's Help for Mental Illnesses](#) webpage.

It may be helpful for children and teens to save several emergency numbers to their cell phones. The ability to get immediate help for themselves or for a friend can make a difference.

- The phone number for a trusted friend or relative
- The non-emergency number for the local police department
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988
- Crisis Text Line: Text the word "HOME" to 741741

If you or someone you know needs immediate help, call or text the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) at **988**. The Crisis Text Line is for any mental health crisis.