

Mental Health of Children

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Stage	Ages	Basic Conflict	Important Event	Summary
1. Oral Sensory	Birth to 12 to 18 months	Trust vs. Mistrust	Feeding	The infant must form a first loving, trusting relationship with the care giver, or develop a sense of mistrust.
1. Muscular -Anal	18 months to 3 years	Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt	Toilet Training	The child's energies are directed toward the development of physical skills, including walking, grasping and rectal sphincter control. The child learns to control by may develop shame and doubt if not handled well.
1. Locomotor	3 to 6 years	Initiative vs. Guilt	Independence	The child continues to become more assertive and to take more initiative, but may be too forceful, leading to guilt feelings.
1. Latency	6 to 12 years	Industry vs. Inferiority	School	The child must deal with demands of learning new skills or risk a sense of inferiority, failure and incompetence.
1. Adolescence	12 to 18 years	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Peer Relationships	The teenager must achieve a sense of identity in occupation, sex roles, politics and religion.
1. Young Adult	19 to 40 years	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love Relationships	The young adult must develop intimate relationships or suffer feelings of isolation.
1. Middle Adulthood	40 to 65 years	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Parenting	Each adult must find some way to satisfy and support the next generation
1. Maturity	65 to death	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Reflection on and acceptance of one's life	The culmination is a sense of oneself as one is and of feeling fulfilled.

Developmental Stages

Neurodevelopmental Disorders

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Specific Learning Disorder

Intellectual Disability

Other Disorders

- ADHD
- Language & Speech
- Motor
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Elimination
- Feeding & Eating
- Trauma & Stress Related

Mental Health Disorders



Can Children Really Suffer from Depression?

Childhood depression is different from the normal “blues: and everyday emotions that occur as a child develops. Being sad is not of major concern. It becomes concerning when the sadness is persistent; or, when disruptive behavior interferes with normal activities.



Yes, they can.



How Can You Tell if a Child is Depressed?

- Irritability or anger
- Persistent aggressive behavior
- Continuous feeling of sadness/hopelessness
- Increase sensitivity to rejection
- Changes in appetite
- Changes in sleep
- Change in school performance
- Persistent nightmares
- Hearing voices or seeing things
- Vocal outburst/crying
- Poor concentration
- Fatigue/low energy
- Physical complaints
- Feeling worthless
- Impaired thinking
- Thoughts of suicide
- Defying authority
- Persistent disobedience
- Loss of interest in friends

Symptoms Vary



Which Children Get Depressed?

- About 2.5% of children in US suffer with depression
- Significantly more common in boys under age of 10
- By age 16, girls are more likely to be depressed

It may also occur with, or be hidden by, ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) and CD (conduct disorder)..

Depression Symptoms in Children

- Apathy
- Complaints of pains; including headaches, back-pain stomachache
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty making decisions
- Excessive or inappropriate guilt
- Use of alcohol/drugs
- Problems in school
- Irresponsible behavior like being late for classes, skipping school, forgetting responsibilities
- Loss of interest in food
- Memory loss
- Awake all night/sleeping all day
- Withdrawal from friends
- No Friends
- Plunging self esteem

Depression Signs

- Physical health
- Life events
- Family History
- Environmental
- Genetic vulnerability
- Biochemical disturbances

As with adults, depression in children can be caused by any combination of factors.

Causes of Depression Symptoms in Children

As in adults, many mental health disorders in children have been linked to abnormal function of particular areas of the brain that control emotion, thinking, perception and behavior. Head traumas also can sometimes lead to changes in mood and personality.

Physical Health

Some mental disorders might be triggered by psychological trauma, such as severe emotional, physical or sexual abuse; and important early loss, such as the loss of a parent; and neglect.

Life Events (Trauma)

Many mental disorders run in families, suggesting a vulnerability to the disorders, might be passed on from parents to children through genes.

Family History

Stressful or traumatic events can trigger a disorder in a person with a vulnerability to a mental disorder.

Environmental

- Parents are depressed
- Chaotic or conflicted families
- Abuse of alcohol and other drugs

Children with family history of depression are at greater risk of experiencing depression themselves. As a result, it is important to address some of these issues early on.

Can Depression in Children be Prevented

- Many depressive symptoms (changes in eating, sleeping, activities)
- Social isolation
- Increased action out (sexually/behavioral)
- Giving away possessions
- Increased risk taking behavior
- Frequent accidents
- Substance abuse
- Focus on morbid/negative things
- Increased crying or reduced emotions

Suicidal Warning Signs



Can Children Really Suffer From Anxiety?

Anxiety in children is serious, and we tend to minimize it. We tend to think it is all within the normal range of childhood behavior; however, it is not."

Childhood anxiety disorders are persistent symptoms that center on a single theme. They cause children a great deal of distress and disrupt their daily lives.



They can.

- **Separation anxiety.** The most common childhood anxiety disorder is when a child fears there is a threat to his family. There's a deep-seated fear that something bad is going to happen to one of the family members; or to the child. Being apart from their family is scary to these children. They may get very real headaches, stomachaches, or diarrhea on school days; but, the pain comes from their brains, not their bowels.
- **Social phobia.** These kids are extremely uncomfortable with the social aspects of school. They often become "socially mute." They'll talk with their father or mother or sister, but not with anyone outside the home. Often they refuse to go to school.
- **Generalized anxiety disorder.** These kids worry excessively about the future; and, about how they will do in college, even though they're in third grade. When you ask, how they did in a game and acknowledge their good performance, they'll say "Yeah but I'm worried about the spelling test tomorrow."

Various Types of Anxiety



How Can You Tell if My Child has Anxiety?

- Frequent sadness, tearfulness
- Hopelessness
- Decreased interest in activities
- Persistent boredom, low energy
- Social isolation, poor communication
- Frequent absences from school
- Talks or efforts to run away
- Low self esteem and guilt
- Extreme sensitivity to rejection
- Difficulty with relationships
- Frequent complaints of physical illness like headaches and stomach aches
- Poor concentration
- Thoughts or expression of suicide

Anxiety Symptoms

- Stress from school
- Stress in the family (i.e.; domestic violence or financial stress)
- Stress from an emotional trauma such as the death of a loved one
- Stress from a serious medical illness
- Side effect of medication (i.e.; Albuterol)
- Use of an illicit drug, such as cocaine
- Symptom of a medical illness
- Lack of sleep, not eating well, and not exercising

Causes of Anxiety Symptoms in Children



How Can You Tell if a Child has ADHD?

There are three groups of symptoms:

- Inattention
- Hyperactivity
- Impulsivity

Various Types of ADHD

- Disorganized
- Lack focus
- Difficult time paying attention to details and a tendency to make careless mistakes.
- Work might be messy/careless.
- Trouble staying on topic while talking, not listening to others, and/or not following social rules
- Forgetful about daily activities (for example, missing appointments, forgetting to bring lunch)
- Easily distracted by things like trivial noises or events that are usually ignored by others

Inattention

- Fidgets and squirms when seated.
- Gets up frequently to walk or run around.
- Runs or climbs a lot when it's not appropriate. (In teens this may seem like restlessness.)
- Trouble playing quietly or doing quiet hobbies
- Always on the go
- Talks excessively

Hyperactivity

- Impatience
- Difficult time waiting to talk or react
- Difficult time waiting for their turn.
- Blurts out answers before someone finishes asking them a question.
- Frequently interrupts or intrudes on others. This often happens so much that it causes problems in social or work settings.
- Starts conversations at inappropriate times

Impulsivity

Studies show that brain chemicals, called neurotransmitters, don't work the same in children with ADHD. There also tend to be differences in the way nerve pathways work.

Certain parts of the brain may be less active or smaller in children with ADHD than those without the disorder. The brain chemical dopamine may also play a role. It carries signals between nerves in the brain and is linked to movement, sleep, mood, attention, and learning.

What Goes On in the Brain?

- Heredity
- Low birth weight
- Head injury to the frontal lobe which controls impulse and emotions
- Studies show that if mother smokes or drinks during pregnancy there is a higher risk
- Exposure to lead, PCP's (manufactured chemicals known as congeners), or pesticides may also have a role
- Certain medication (i.e.: Albuterol)

Causes of ADHD

Symptoms in Children

- A person's mind is not like diagnosing a mechanical issue
- We look at:
 - Symptoms
 - Duration
 - Onset
 - What has been normal
 - Family history
- There are assessment tools which are also used



Diagnosing

- Bandages are not visible
- We use:
 - Individual Psychotherapy
 - Play Therapy
 - Group Therapy
 - Collateral Session
 - Family Therapy
 - Medication Therapy
- Collaboration with:
 - Medial provider
 - School personnel
 - Others



Treatment



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