

Signs and Symptoms of Mental Health Issues

The American Psychiatric Association and the Mayo Clinic list the following as examples of some of the signs and symptoms of Mental Health Issues

- o Feeling sad or down
- o Excessive fears or worries, or extreme feelings of guilt
- o Extreme mood changes of highs and lows
- o Significant tiredness, low energy or problems sleeping
- o Detachment from reality (delusions), paranoia or hallucinations
- o Inability to cope with daily problems or stress
- o Trouble understanding and relating to situations and to people
- o Alcohol or drug abuse
- o Major changes in eating habits
- o Sex drive changes
- o Excessive anger, hostility or violence
- o Suicidal thinking
- o Withdrawal — Recent social withdrawal and loss of interest in others
- o Drop in functioning — An unusual drop in functioning, at school, work or social activities, such as quitting sports, failing in school or difficulty performing familiar tasks
- o Problems thinking — Problems with concentration, memory or logical thought and speech that are hard to explain
- o Increased sensitivity — Heightened sensitivity to sights, sounds, smells or touch; avoidance of over-stimulating situations
- o Apathy — Loss of initiative or desire to participate in any activity
- o Feeling disconnected — A vague feeling of being disconnected from oneself or one's surroundings; a sense of unreality
- o Illogical thinking — Unusual or exaggerated beliefs about personal powers to understand meanings or influence events; illogical or "magical" thinking typical of childhood in an adult
- o Nervousness — Fear or suspiciousness of others or a strong nervous feeling
- o Unusual behavior – Odd, uncharacteristic, peculiar behavior
- o Sleep or appetite changes — Dramatic sleep and appetite changes or decline in personal care
- o Mood changes — Rapid or dramatic shifts in feelings

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Causes of Mental Health Issues

By Fr. Tom Konopka, L.C.S.W.

Mental health issues are caused by a combination of factors: biological, environmental, unhealthy coping skills, and trauma to mention a few. It is important, especially, for parents to know what is happening in their child's life, whether they are young or in their teens. Two important contributing factors for children and teens are bullying and stress. Since many people will try to hide the early signs of a mental health issue, it is important to have a dialogue with the person and be honest about what is seen. There is help for these issues and many people struggle for years because of stigma and fear.