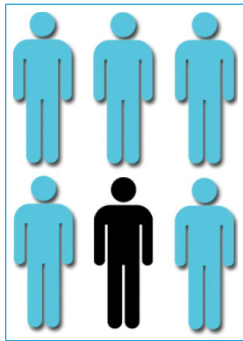




Menninger®

# Mental Health Matters for Children

## Be Sure You Know



One (1) in six (6) school-aged youth experiences difficulties that affect their daily life due to a mental health matter. It can get more severe as kids grow older.

Half of all mental illnesses emerge during or before the teenage years. Yet, fewer than half of these youth receive

adequate treatment. The pandemic and other social issues have affected school-aged students more than ever.

### Watch for Signs of Mental Health Issues

- Withdrawing from others
- Having very low energy
- Appearing disheveled
- Losing interest in favorite activities
- Trouble concentrating
- Becoming easily irritated or angered
- Changing eating habits
- Changing sleeping patterns
- Crying a lot
- Giving away personal possessions
- Talking about being a burden
- Stealing money from family
- Changes in friends; a relationship breaks off

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Brought to you by The Menninger Clinic. 713-275-5400  
Financial assistance available for qualifying families

### Why Distress Matters

Kids with a mental health issue may have:

- Trouble making and keeping friendships
- Trouble completing homework
- Slowed problem solving
- Absence from school
- Lower grades; not graduating or attaining GED
- Difficulty following school routines and norms
- Feelings of isolation or they get bullied
- Thoughts about attempting suicide

### Actions for Parents

1. Keep the line of communication open. Ask your child how they're doing and what's happening in their world. This can be as simple as "Are you OK?" while riding in the car.
2. Listen intently and without judgment. Validate their frustrations, fears and feelings; rather than minimize.
3. Follow their cues. Keep the conversation flowing by saying things like, "Tell me more about that. I would love to understand more what that's like for you."
4. If your child is talking about distress, do not be afraid to ask how much it changes their mood or stress level. Respond to changes in mood or distress with something like "That must be hard. I'm sorry your dealing with that. What can I do to support you?"
5. If your child says they wish they were dead, take it seriously. Asking your child directly if they are having thoughts about suicide won't plant the idea or increase that risk.
6. Seek help right away for a mental health crisis or suicide risk. Call the Crisis and Suicide Lifeline at 9-8-8. A trained adult will listen and guide getting help.

