

# When should I take my child to talk with a Therapist/Counsellor?

contributed by Shanna Kay Stephens, RSW, MSW

Taking a child to talk to a therapist or counsellor can be a daunting task for some parents or caregivers who may not know where to begin. Start with a familiar point of reference – your child’s family physician or pediatrician. This may be a professional who has been in your child’s life for many years and with whom you have developed a professional care relationship with. Make an appointment and bring your questions and concerns.

Before attending an appointment, reflect and identify what your child’s “normal” level of functioning is and observe if he or she has any marked changes in their behaviour at home, school, place of worship, extracurricular activities, and other social engagements.

## Some things to consider/observe are:

- Has there been changes in my child’s sleeping patterns?
- Has my child complained about having nightmares?
- Given their chronological age, does he or she engage in bed-wetting more than normal?
- Is my child more clingy than usual?
- Is my child worried about things that are not appropriate for their chronological age?
- Has there been changes in his or her language development?
- During playdates or other social activities, is my child more withdrawn than usual?



Teachers are also a good source of noticing if there is anything “off” with your child. Besides parents, educators spend a good portion of their day with our children. They may have a unique perspective and can let you know about your child’s academic and social functioning in the classroom, at recess, lunch, and other settings at school.

Once you have prepared your questions and booked the appointment, some medical practitioners, based on their assessment, may recommend counselling or therapy as an option.

Sometimes parents may require counselling support while they witness these changes in their children, as this experience may accompany feelings of fear, uncertainty, helplessness, and hopelessness, among others.

If so, you can always contact Pursuit Health Orangeville, to book a free, 15 minute phone consultation or schedule an initial counselling session for yourself, a counselling session for you and your spouse/partner, or a family session for you and your child.

We are a friendly, professional, multi-disciplinary clinic and we are here to help!



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## Shanna-Kay Stephens, Counsellor, RSW, MSW.

For advice on emotional/behavioural health, self-care, stress management techniques, and effective coping strategies, please contact Pursuit Health Orangeville at 519-940-3600 or book [online](#) for an individual, family, or couples counselling session.