

Points for Parents

Youth and Mental Illness

Youth and Anxiety

- Constant worrying and intense fears about the safety of parents and caretakers
- Refusal to go to school
- Frequent complaints of stomach aches, headaches and other physical ailments
- Extreme worry about sleeping away from home
- Overly clingy
- Panic or tantrums at time of separation
- Trouble sleeping or nightmares

Youth and Depression

Symptoms:

- Frequent crying
- Complaining of physical illnesses (headaches, stomach aches or general aches and pains)
- Decreased interest in activities once enjoyed
- Irritability
- Problems with eating
- Changes in sleeping patterns
- Lower marks in school
- Low self-esteem
- Poor concentration
- Signs of worry, unhappiness, hopelessness, guilt
- Drug and alcohol use
- Self-inflicted injuries
- Thoughts of suicide

Youth and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

- Thoughts (Obsessions)
 - Actions (Compulsive)
- Symptoms:** (repetitive and excessive)
- Handwashing
 - Showering or bathing
 - Toothbrushing
 - Cleaning household items
 - Grooming
 - Hoarding objects
 - Touching certain objects in a certain way
 - Checking locks, doors, windows, light switches etc.
 - Turning taps or lights on and off in a specific sequence
 - Placing or arranging items in a certain way



Signs

- Marked drop in school performance or increase in absenteeism
- Excessive use of alcohol and/or drugs
- Marked changes in sleeping and/or eating habits
- Many physical complaints (such as headaches or stomach aches)
- Aggressive or non-aggressive consistent violations of rights of others: opposition to authority, truancy, thefts, vandalism, etc.
- Withdrawal from friends, family and regular activities
- Depression shown by sustained, prolonged negative mood and attitude, often accompanied by poor appetite, difficulty sleeping or thoughts of death
- Frequent outbursts of anger and rage
- Low energy level, poor concentration or complaints of boredom
- Loss of enjoyment in what used to be favourite activities
- Unusual neglect of personal appearance
- Intense fear of becoming obese with no relationship to actual body weight
- Uncharacteristic delinquent, thrill seeking or promiscuous behaviour
- Marked personality change
- Comments about “feeling rotten inside”, wanting “to end things”, and “no longer being a problem for others soon”

Resources

- Canadian Psychiatric Association: <http://publications.cpa-apc.org/browse/documents/20>
- National Eating Disorder Information Centre: www.nedic.ca
- Schizophrenia Society of Ontario: www.schizophrenia.on.ca

Midland
Youth
Project

725-5491
ext. 247



Crisis Services 24 hr Phone Support
Access to Kinark Mobile Services
1-888-893-8333/705-728-5044



Points for Parents

Youth and Mental Illness

Youth and Panic Disorder

Symptoms:

- Extreme Fear
- Difficulty Breathing
- Chest Pains
- Pounding heart
- Shakiness or dizziness
- Feelings of losing control
- Belief that they are going to die
- Fear of leaving the house because something bad is going to happen to them

Youth and Social Anxiety

Symptoms:

- Fear of meeting or talking to people
- Avoidance of social or performance situations
- Few friends outside of family
- Problems speaking in class or in front of people
- Sweating, blushing or showing muscle tension during social situations
- Fear of being embarrassed or making mistakes
- Low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence

Youth and Schizophrenia

Symptoms:

- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things which are not there)
- Odd behaviours and/or speech
- Unusual or bizarre thoughts and/or ideas
- Confusing television and dreams with reality
- Confused or disoriented thinking
- Major change in personality and moods
- Suspicions of being watched, followed or plotted against
- Severe anxiety and fearfulness
- Difficulty relating to peers and keeping friends
- Withdrawal and self-isolation
- Decline in personal hygiene
- Lack of concentration
- Flat emotional expression
- Distorted 'sense of self'
- Lack of direction and motivation

Youth and Anorexia Nervosa

Symptoms:

- Extreme Weight Loss
- Inability to maintain a normal weight based on age and height
- Obsessive desire to be thinner
- Fear of gaining weight or becoming 'fat'
- Inability to see one's body as it really is, thinking it is larger
- Allowing weight and shape to influence how one feels about oneself

Youth and Bulimia Nervosa

Symptoms:

- Repeated episodes of bingeing and purging
- Going to the bathroom, vomiting after eating
- Feeling out of control while eating
- Use of laxatives, diet pills or diuretics
- Excessive exercising
- Skipping meals
- Frequent dieting
- Allowing weight and shape to influence how one feels about oneself