

TEEN MENTAL HEALTH: WHEN IT'S MORE THAN A BAD DAY

Moodiness, conflict, and stress can be part of adolescence. The key question is often not whether a teen has difficult days, but whether changes are intense, persistent, escalating, or interfering with everyday life.

What to notice or do:

- Pay attention to duration. A difficult day is different from weeks of hopelessness, withdrawal, or loss of interest.
- Look at functioning. Notice changes in school attendance, concentration, sleep, eating, hygiene, relationships, or responsibilities.
- Notice sudden shifts. A dramatic improvement after a period of severe distress can also warrant a caring check-in.
- Take online experiences seriously. Cyberbullying, harassment, social exclusion, and exposure to harmful content can intensify distress.
- Treat statements about death, self-harm, being a burden, or having “no reason to be here” as signals to ask more questions.



Keep in mind: Adults do not need to decide whether a teen’s feelings are “serious enough” before offering support. Curiosity and consistency matter: keep checking in, keep listening, and keep the pathway to help visible.

Reaching out can start with one sentence. Try, “I’m not doing well and I need someone to stay with me,” or “I’ve been having thoughts that scare me.” You deserve support before things reach a breaking point.