



Mental Health Challenges in Teens

Learning the Signs and Symptoms

It's a time of intense stress and pressure for teens today, coming from a variety of directions. For parents, teachers, mentors and others caring for young people, it can be very important to understand how to identify to signs of distress and help them get the assistance they need.

What anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts might look like

Common signs that a teen or young person might be in distress:

- Pulling away from friend groups without integrating into an alternative group
- Quitting extracurricular activities without replacing them with something else
- Change in hygiene or drastic changes in appearance
- Looking or acting more tired than usual
- Victim of assault or bullying
- Sudden lashing out at teachers or fellow students
- Isolating themselves during lunch or group activities
- An uptick in unexplained absences
- Sudden change in grades or stop completing assignments
- An elevated mood after a period of depression
(*can be associated with suicidal thoughts*)
- Talking, reading, or writing about death or suicide
(*can be associated with suicidal thoughts*)

1 in 5
teens and young
adults lives with a
mental health
condition.*

*National Alliance for Mental Illness

How can you help a teen struggling with mental health challenges?

Listen. You don't need to feel like you have to solve their problems or give advice, but being available to listen can be one of the most important things you can do to help someone struggling.

optumidaho.com



Mental Health Challenges in Teens

Learning the Signs and Symptoms

Don't judge. Show that you're concerned in a way that is not confrontational or judgmental. Let them know that you care about them and are checking in because of concern.

Keep questions simple. Ask how they are doing, what they are feeling and how you can help.

Offer hope. Reassure them. Let them know they are not alone and you are there to support them.

Provide a safe, supportive environment. Feeling connected to supportive adults in a stable environment is critical to a young person's wellbeing and often helps reduce substance abuse, mental health issues and other risky behaviors.

Suggest resources. Have local support resources ready to share or offer to find those resources together.

Stay connected. After your initial conversation, stay engaged and check in regularly. Let them know that you are still there.

50%
of all mental
illnesses begin by
age 14, and 75%
by their mid-20s. **

*Archives of General Psychiatry

Support Resources in Idaho

Free Youth Mental Health First Aid classes available from Optum Idaho. Email idaho.communications@optum.com for more information.

Idaho Careline: **2-1-1**

Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline: **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** or text **208-398-4357**

Optum Idaho's 24/7 Member Access and Crisis Line: **1-855-202-0973** (TDD/TTY services at **711** for the hearing impaired) or visit optumidaho.com

At Optum Idaho, we believe in helping one person, one family and one community at a time. For more information on Optum Idaho, visit optumidaho.com.