



Child Builders

Houston's Advocates for Mental Health in Children

My Child's Mental Health

Source of information: US Department of Health & Human Services, SAMHSA

What is Mental Health? Mental health is how we think, feel and act in order to face life's situations. It is how we look at our self, our life and the people in our life: how we evaluate our options and make choices. Mental health includes things like handling stress, relating to other people and making decisions.

Everyone has mental health. Mental health ranges from good to not so good and even to poor. A person's mental health may move through the range; sometimes a person is healthier than other times and sometimes he or she needs help to handle problems. Many people experience mental health problems at some time during their lives.

Mental health can impact the daily life and the future of a young person. For example, schoolwork, relationships, and physical health can be affected by mental health. Caring and protecting a child's mental health is a major part of helping a child grow to become the best he or she can be.

Like adults, children and adolescents can have mental health problems that interfere with the way they think, feel and act. These problems are real and painful. They can lead to school failure, family conflict, drug abuse, violence or suicide. Mental health problems often limit young people's current and future ability to be productive.

Mental health problems can happen to people of any age, race, or religion or from any kind of family—no matter what kind of job, education, or income level. Mental health problems in young people are caused by biology, environment or a mix of both. If young people are exposed to violence, loss of important people, abuse or neglect, they are more likely to be at risk for mental health problems. Other risk factors may include feeling continuous rejections because of race, religion, sexual orientation or family income. When there are problems, seeking help early may prevent them from getting worse.

Studies show that, at any given time, at least one in five children or adolescents may have a mental health problem. An estimated two-thirds of all young people with mental health problems who need help are not getting it! Most often, children's and adolescent's mental health are not recognized for what they are—and appropriate help is not sought. The stigma about mental health problems keeps many people from asking for help.

Mental health problems are not your fault. They don't mean you are weak or a failure. They don't mean you aren't trying. Whatever the cause, the important thing is to get help for your child.

Help is available!

ChildBuilders (formerly known as HAMIC), founded in 1974, is a non-profit organization that provides innovative programs to educate parents, children, teachers and the community about the emotional well-being of children and their families. www.childbuilders.org ChildBuilders Community Education.

For further information & referral
call your child's school counselor

DePelchin Children's Center	713-730-2335
ESCAPE Family Resource Center	713-942-9500
Harris County Psychiatric Center	713-741-5000
Jewish Family Service	713-667-9336
Mental Health Association	713-522-5161
MHMRA of Harris County	713-970-7070
NAMI Metro Houston	281-579-3750
United Way of Texas Gulf Coast	211 or 713-957-4357

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