

ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is an important part of our overall well-being. It is how we think, feel and act. Mental health problems can affect anyone, regardless of age, race, ethnicity or gender.

Many people do not realize that even children, especially adolescents, can experience mental health problems. *IN FACT, ONE IN EVERY FIVE CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS HAS A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM.* These problems can interfere with daily life activities at home, school and work.

TWO-THIRDS OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS ARE NOT GETTING THE HELP THEY NEED.

Teens may feel scared or ashamed to seek help or they assume the problem will disappear on its own. Mental health problems are **REAL AND SERIOUS**. Neglecting to get help can lead to serious and sometimes life-threatening consequences.

If a child, adolescent or someone you know has any of these warning signs, **SEEK HELP** immediately. Talk to your family doctor or any doctor, a mental health professional, a school counselor or get support from your community or neighborhood resources.

**National Resources:
National Mental Health
Association
1-800-969-6642
www.nmha.org**

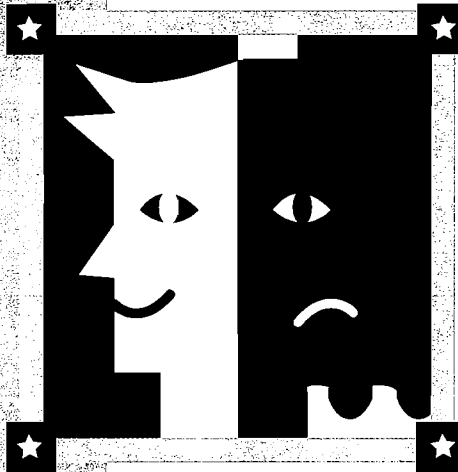
**National Institute of Mental
Health
301-443-4513
www.nimh.nih.gov**

Mental health problems can be caused by **BIOLOGICAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL** factors. Sometimes it is a mixture of both. Biological reasons may include:

- * genetics
- * chemical imbalances
- * damage or injury to the brain

Some environmental reasons may be:

- * exposure to environmental toxins
- * target of or witness to violence or abuse
- * loss of an important person
- * high level of stress for extended period of time



Certain symptoms may signal a possible mental health problem. Pay attention to the following

WARNING SIGNS:

- * Feeling really sad and hopeless for no apparent reason and the feelings do not go away
- * Feeling really anxious or scared and the feelings keep returning
- * Feeling worthless and guilty
- * Experiencing unexplained changes in eating and sleeping patterns

- * Withdrawing from other people
- * Losing interest and pleasure in favorite activities
- * Experiencing racing thoughts or agitation
- * Feeling easily irritated or angered
- * Believing others are plotting against you
- * Hearing voices or seeing images that others do not experience
- * Wanting to harm yourself or others