

# When to Worry About Mental Health

Life seems to move faster with every day and when it comes to raising kids today, worries about their mental health can be of concern. There are specific emotions and behaviors that can signal a child is struggling with their mental health. Sometimes kids aren't even aware of what the problem is that they're having, but this is when actions can speak louder than words. They might not be able to tell you what the problem is, BUT you will be able to identify that they're struggling.

When a new behavior or emotion is noticed, there are three questions you can ask to qualify the behavior and try to understand if it is a problem:

1. How often?
2. How long?
3. Does it interfere/disrupt regular activities?



After determining if the concern seems to be worsening and disruptive, then it's important to seek feedback and information from other adults in your child's life such as a teacher, counselor, coach or other family member. Similar concerns may signal the need to talk to your child's pediatrician or a mental health professional for guidance.

## Conversation Starter Questions

(Ideas to ask for practice)

- What's your favorite song right now? How does it make you feel?
- What's the best thing about school?
- What three words would you use to describe yourself?
- What makes you laugh?
- What scares you the most?

## Conversation Starter Questions for When You're Concerned

- Have you been feeling sad/angry/nervous lately?
- Is there something you want to change about your life right now?
- I've been worried about you recently. Is there something going on I can help you with?
- I've noticed that you seem sad/you don't hang out with your friends anymore/your grades are dropping/etc. Is there something bothering you?

