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# The Importance of Early Intervention for Mental Health

— \*With Katie Campbell-Elsdon, Heather Vale —  
and Naomi Russell

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# Territorial Acknowledgement

We would like to recognize the Esquimalt, Songhees and Lkwungen Nations whose traditional territories we live, learn and do our work.



# Agenda for this evening:

1. Brief presentation by Katie Campbell-Elsdon, School Counsellor, 25 minutes
2. Insights from Heather Vale, 5-10 minutes
3. Insights from Naomi Russell, 5-10 minutes
4. Parent Questions, 15 minutes

# What's the Issue?

- Healthy emotional and social development in early years lay the foundation for mental health and resilience throughout life.
- An estimated 1.2 million children and youth in Canada are affected by mental illness—yet, less than 20 per cent will receive appropriate treatment.
- About 70% of mental health challenges have their onset in childhood or youth. That's why early identification and intervention is so critical and can lead to improved achievement in school and better health outcomes in life.



A MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

# MANDATORY OBLIGATOIRE

UNE INITIATIVE EN SANTÉ MENTALE

# Child Development and Behaviours

Many children and youth will exhibit different moods, thoughts and behaviours at various times that can be part of normal childhood development. These include:

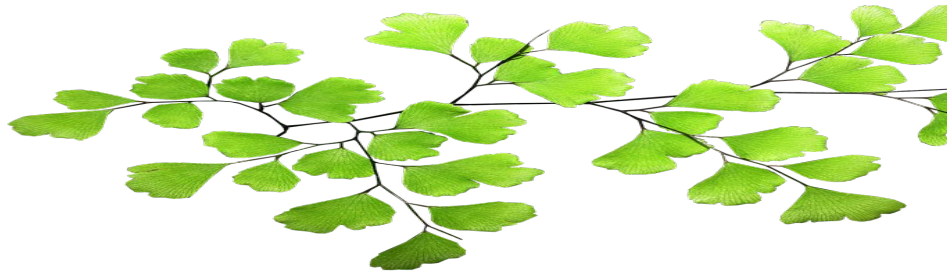
- Not wanting to go to school
- avoiding friends and family
- having frequent outbursts of anger
- changes to sleeping or eating habits
- acting out or rebelling against authority
- frequent crying
- not doing the things they used to enjoy
- worrying
- experiencing mood swings
- not concerned with their appearance
- obsessed with their weight
- lacking energy or motivation
- increased risk-taking behaviour
- feeling very down



# BUT.....

these characteristics and behaviours may be signs of an underlying mental health concern or disorder if they:

- are intense
- persist over long period of time (3 months or more)
- are inappropriate for the child's age
- interfere with the child's life



# Mental Health Disorders

Some of the most common disorders among children and youth include:

- anxiety
- attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- depression and other mood disorders
- schizophrenia
- eating disorders

***When children and youth have a physical illness or injury, parents seek professional help and get them the medical attention they need. When children and youth have symptoms of a mental illness, they need their parents to respond in the same way.***





Most mental health issues of adulthood have their beginnings in these earlier years. Remember, it's important to pay attention to early signs and symptoms and get help soon.



# What Can Parents Do?



Listen to your instincts if you are worried about your child. Collect as much information as you can. You are probably in the best position to know if your child's behaviour requires further attention. Arrange to meet with a well-trained and trusted professional.

It can be confusing trying to tell the difference between symptoms of mental illness and normal challenges that all kids experience from time to time. As parents, you can use observable behaviours to help decide what action you need to take by:

- circling the behaviours from the list that concern you (especially those lasting a few weeks or more)
- speak to your child regarding your main concerns and keep it brief
- let your child know you will help work out difficult issues together

# What a Mental Health Checklist Looks Like:

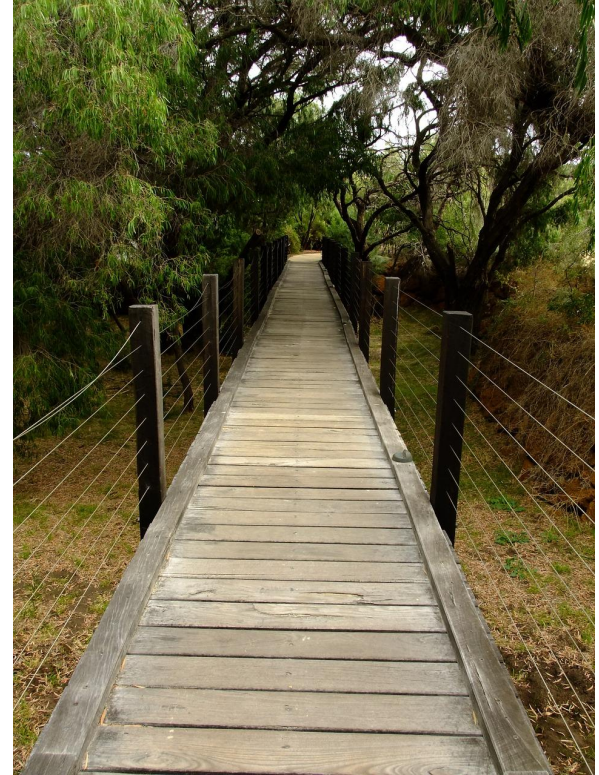
<https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au/age-6-12/mental-health-conditions-in-children/child-mental-health-checklist>



# To Do:

1. Arrange to meet with a trusted and trained professional to discuss your concerns and how to access help. You don't have to do this alone. Help is available.
2. If appropriate, set up a meeting with your child's Teacher and listen to what they have to say. Teachers can provide us information that we might miss at home.
3. Consult with school Administration if your child has regular behaviour difficulties at school.
4. Work with the school counsellor to make a mental health plan at school.

\*It is important we listen to and trust the professionals helping your family and to remember they are coming from a place of wanting to help...not judge.\*



# We Do not want this to happen! Let's work Together

## Youth Mental Health Facts

1 in 5



1 in 5 children ages 13-18 have, or will have a serious mental illness.

20%



Only 20% of young people with mental health challenges receive services.

10 yrs



The average delay between onset of symptoms and intervention is 8-10 years.

50%



Approximately 50% of students age 14 and older with a mental illness drop out of high school.

# Where to go for help:

## General Mental Health Resources

- [Kelty Mental Health Resource](#)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association](#)
- [The Child Mind Institute](#)
- [Effective Child Therapy](#)



# Crisis Services



- Vancouver Island Crisis Line: 1-888-494-3888
- Canada Wide Kids Help Phone (5-20 years):  
1-800-668-6868
- Local Crisis Text Services: 250-800-3806
- Youth Online Crisis Chat: [www.youthinbc.com](http://www.youthinbc.com)

# Child and Youth Mental Health

Intake Clinics take place on Tuesday 9 am- 12 pm and Thursday 12 pm - 3 pm

Parents will take part in an intake and then clinicians will help determine what services are best for your child. Please note that this is often waitlisted.





# Psychologists:

Victoria Child and Family Psychological Services:

<https://www.victoriachildpsychology.com>

Thaiss Psychological Services:

(250) 516-6692

Jillian Roberts Psychology Association:

<https://drjillianroberts.com/>



# Registered Clinical Therapists

Naomi Russell, Heartwood Family Wellness

<https://www.heartwoodfamilywellness.com/>

Meg Kapil Counselling <https://megkapil.com/>

Dr. Katie Elmhurst, The Budding Elm <https://www.thebuddingelm.com/>

Sarah Bourdon, Calm Kids <https://www.calmkids.ca/>

Sunny Myles <https://sunnymyles.com/>



Remember, you are not alone in this. Please reach out!

