

We know this is a very difficult and trying time for parents and students alike. This is a time when there is a lot of uncertainty about what is next. There are millions of questions and with that can come anxiety and depression.

Being isolated from friends, family and school can be very difficult for your child to navigate. We wanted to offer some information for all of you regarding common concerns and available support systems.

| <b>Signs of Common Mental Health Challenges in Teens</b>  |   |
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| <b>Depression</b>   | <b>Anxiety</b>  |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Emotional changes:</u></b></p> <p>Be alert for emotional changes, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Feelings of sadness, which can include crying spells for no apparent reason</li> <li>● Frustration or feelings of anger, even over small matters</li> <li>● Feeling hopeless or empty</li> <li>● Irritable or annoyed mood</li> <li>● Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities</li> <li>● Loss of interest in, or conflict with, family and friends</li> <li>● Low self-esteem</li> <li>● Feelings of worthlessness or guilt</li> <li>● Fixation on past failures or exaggerated self-blame or self-criticism</li> <li>● Extreme sensitivity to rejection or failure, and the need for excessive reassurance</li> <li>● Trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions and remembering things</li> <li>● Ongoing sense that life and the future are grim and bleak</li> <li>● Frequent thoughts of death, dying or suicide</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Behavioral changes:</u></b></p> <p>Watch for changes in behavior, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tiredness and loss of energy</li> <li>● Insomnia or sleeping too much</li> <li>● Changes in appetite — decreased appetite and weight loss, or increased cravings for food and weight gain</li> <li>● Use of alcohol or drugs</li> <li>● Agitation or restlessness — for example, pacing, hand-wringing or an inability to sit still</li> <li>● Slowed thinking, speaking or body movements</li> <li>● Frequent complaints of unexplained body aches and headaches, which may include frequent visits to the school nurse</li> <li>● Social isolation</li> <li>● Poor school performance or frequent absences from school</li> <li>● Less attention to personal hygiene or appearance</li> <li>● Angry outbursts, disruptive or risky behavior, or other acting-out behaviors</li> <li>● Self-harm — for example, cutting, burning, or excessive piercing or tattooing</li> <li>● Making a suicide plan or a suicide attempt</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Emotional changes:</u></b></p> <p>While some anxious teens express feelings of pervasive worry, others experience subtle emotional changes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Feeling “keyed up”</li> <li>● Feeling on edge</li> <li>● Irritability</li> <li>● Difficulty concentrating</li> <li>● Restlessness</li> <li>● Unexplained outbursts</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Social changes:</u></b></p> <p><i>(please note, some of these are the new “norm” for society, and should be considered carefully. These are often accompanied by other factors listed.</i></p> <p>Anxiety can negatively affect friendships. If your once social teen suddenly avoids his favorite activities or stops making plans with friends, think twice. You might notice your child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Avoiding social interactions with usual friends</li> <li>● Avoiding extracurricular activities</li> <li>● Isolating from peer group</li> <li>● Spending increased time alone</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Physical changes:</u></b></p> <p>Many of the physical complaints that can occur with an anxiety disorder mimic average teen complaints, which tend to increase as they get older. Pay attention to patterns. A couple of headaches here and there shouldn’t be a cause for concern, for example, but frequent headaches are a red flag. Watch for these common psychosomatic complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Frequent headaches, including migraines</li> <li>● Gastrointestinal problems</li> <li>● Unexplained aches and pains</li> <li>● Excessive fatigue</li> <li>● Complaints of not feeling well with no obvious medical cause</li> <li>● Changes in eating habits.</li> </ul> <p>Changes in sleep patterns, school grades and an onset of panic attacks can also be indicators that you or your child is suffering from anxiety.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>sources: MayoClinic.com, Psyc.com.net</i></p> |

**PLEASE NOTE: Many of our teens exhibit some of these characteristics as part of their personality - these are only considered concerning when they are "new" to your child.**

**Here are some resources to help you during this time:**

- If you, your child or one of their friends feels suicidal, please immediately call 911 and ask for a welfare check.
- The Maricopa County Crisis Team is available 24/7 at 602-222-9444. This program is a **FREE** service. They will assess someone who is feeling suicidal and assist you with getting them the help they need.
- Teen Lifeline offers students, and parents alike, someone to talk to. You do NOT have to be suicidal to speak to someone. They are available 24/7. They can be reached by calling 602-248-8336.
- If you have AHCCCS, please call the mental healthcare number on the back of your card to access a counselor
- If you have private insurance, you can find a therapist- and search by a number of specific care options- on [psychologytoday.com](http://psychologytoday.com)
- If you have no insurance or AHCCCS, there are many places that offer free/low cost or sliding scale fees. These fees are based on income. A few of these include:
  - Adelante Healthcare  
<https://adelantehealthcare.com/services/integrated-behavioral-health-services/>
  - Mountain Park Health:  
<https://mountainparkhealth.org/>
- For additional resources please visit:
  - <http://www.mpsaz.org/parentresources>
  - <http://www.arizonatogether.org>
  - <https://211arizona.org/>
  - <https://openpathcollective.org/>

**ALL Arizona elementary schools are offering FREE lunch/breakfast to ANY child under the age of 18 (your child does NOT need to qualify for free/reduced lunch to receive this food). To find your closest elementary school, please visit: <https://www.schooldigger.com/go/AZ/search.aspx>**

We understand this is a lot of information and this is a very difficult time for many. If you need additional resources for food, internet, clothing, etc, please reach out. Food boxes are limited, but there is some availability. Should you need *anything* I am available Monday Through Friday 7:45am – 3:45pm.