

## Being Alert to Mental Health Problems



Everyone should be aware of behaviors that could be an indication of mental health problems. It's not unusual for children to occasionally display behaviors that appear in one of the categories below. For that reason it's important for school staff to consider frequency, severity, and duration when judging whether or not the behavior warrants a discussion with the student, and/or parent, or intervention by a school professional.

### Emotions

(Excessive or none, rapid shifts)

- Very sad, cries, depressed
- Very afraid
- Lack of emotional control
- Hopelessness/helplessness
- Very anxious
- Shy doesn't seem to have feelings

### Social Interaction

(Uninterested or not successful)

- Doesn't pay attention to peers
- Refuses to talk
- Cruel
- Bullying
- Promiscuous
- Manipulative
- Excessively reactive
- Resists authority
- Unusual, strange, or immature
- Alienates others
- Highly aggressive (physically or sexually)
- Has no friends

### Behaviors

(Acts in ways that are troublesome)

- Very immature for age
- Vague physical complaints
- Frequent outbursts/temper tantrums
- Violent/aggressive
- Hurts self
- Often angry
- Cruel to animals
- Truancy, school avoidance
- Sleep problems and/or nightmares
- Trouble learning
- Wetting/soiling at school
- Eating problems
- Unaccounted for weight loss/gain
- Sets fires
- Impulsive
- Ritualistic –always same process
- Stealing
- Lies often
- Destroys things
- Cheats often

### Indicators of Unusual Thinking

(Difficulty concentrating, strange thoughts and ideas)

- Worries a lot
- Preoccupied with death or other topics
- Scattered thoughts – can't stay focused
- May hear or see things – delusional
- Thoughts are intrusive