

# I think my CHILD needs Mental Health Therapy

Children and Teens often struggle with some anxiety, social problems, school difficulties and moodiness as they grow up and some of these are expected. It is when these emotional and behavioural problems becomes concerning to the parents or caregivers that therapy is sought after. Family and friends might tell the parents that the children or teens will grow out of their "issues" and to just relax and wait it out. This might be good advice, but sometimes it is not and further help and guidance is needed. In some instances it is recommended to seek therapy on "the-sooner-the-better" principle as waiting could cause further problems which can sometimes turn into something more serious.

Even if problems aren't severe in a child, the therapist can help the child by introducing new coping skills and different strategies for handling problems. Therapy often involves the entire family in learning new skills on how to communicate, how to create healthy boundaries and give support to one another.

## When to seek Help or take Action:

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| If abuse was notices and reported  | When trauma was experienced  |
| When an eating disorder is developed   | When there is a history of mental health illness in the family   |
| When self-harm is practised  | When there are problems in multiple areas of life<br>(e.g. relationships, academic performance, activities, friendships) |
| When the child feels bad about themselves  | When the child withdraws from family, friends and activities   |
| When hopelessness are expressed  | When the child engages in negative behaviour   |
| When there are self-destructive behaviour  | When the child is a bully or experiences bullying  |
| When there is parental divorce   |  |
| When they have problems that they can't cope with alone and these problems affect how they feel, act and do things |  |

## What happens in Therapy:

Therapy with children and teens involve various techniques that can help the child learn more about their problems and how to deal with it. Some of the techniques involve:

- Talking, which is a healthy way of expressing their feelings instead of acting out their feelings in a negative way. It is also very effective in problem solving as they learn various problem solving techniques and how to implement these techniques
- Activities (such as Play or Art Therapy) to teach the child new coping skills and help the child to express emotions if they are to young to express their emotions in words
- Breathing and Mindfulness Skills, which is used to teach calming techniques and self-control
- Playing Games, which is useful in teaching the children to practise what they learnt, be patient, follow directions, listening skills, how to share and how to deal with losing

## How you as Parent or Caregiver can Help:

- Both you and your child need to feel comfortable with the therapist
- Take your child to all appointments and attend all the family appointments if it's requested
- Spend time with your child by doing various activities together, like cooking, reading or laughing together
- Show your child love, patience and warmth
- Give praise where it is due and use kind words even if your child has done something naughty or wrong

