

[Childrens Mental Health: Counseling and Treatment-From Marengo, Wauconda and Elgin](#)

Young people have mental, emotional, and behavioral problems that are real, painful, and costly. They are sources of stress for children and their families, schools and communities.

The number of young people and their families who are affected by mental, emotional and behavioral disorders is significant. As many as one in five children and adolescents may have a mental health disorder that requires treatment.

Mental health disorders in children and adolescents are caused by biology, environment or a combination. Examples of biological factors are genetics, chemical imbalances and damage to the central nervous system, such as a head injury.

Environmental factors also can affect a child's mental health, including exposure to violence, extreme stress and the loss of an important person. A broad range of services is often necessary to meet the needs of these young people.

The Problems

Below are descriptions of particular mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders that sometimes occur during childhood and adolescence. All can have a serious impact on your child's overall health.

Some are more common than others and seriousness can range from mild to severe. Sometimes, a child may have more than one disorder simultaneously.

Anxiety Disorders

Young people who experience excessive fear, worry or uneasiness may have an anxiety disorder. These disorders are among the most common emotional problems occurring during childhood.

According to one study, as many as 13 of every 100 young people from 9 to 17 years of age have an anxiety disorder. They include:

1. Phobias, which are unrealistic and overwhelming fears of objects or situations.
2. Generalized anxiety disorder, which causes children to demonstrate a pattern of excessive, unrealistic worry that cannot be attributed to any recent experience.
3. Panic disorder, which causes terrifying panic attacks that include symptoms, such as a rapid heartbeat and dizziness.
4. Obsessive-compulsive disorder, which causes children to become trapped in a pattern of repeated thoughts and behaviors, such as counting or hand washing.
5. Post-traumatic stress disorder, which causes a pattern of flashbacks and other symptoms. This occurs in children who have experienced a psychologically distressing event, such as abuse, being a victim or witness of violence or exposure to other types of trauma, such as wars or natural disasters.

Severe Depression

Experts agree that severe depression can occur at any age. Two of every 100 children may have major depression and as many as eight of every 100 teens may be affected, as well. This disorder is marked by changes in:

1. Emotions: Children often feel sad, cry, or feel worthless.
2. Motivation: Children lose interest in play activities or schoolwork quality declines.
3. Physical well-being: Children may experience changes in appetite or sleeping patterns and/or may have vague physical complaints.

4. Thoughts: Children believe they are ugly, unable to do anything right or that the world or life is hopeless.

It also is important to be aware that some children and adolescents with depression may not value their lives, which can put them at risk for suicide.

Bipolar Disorder

Children and adolescents who demonstrate exaggerated mood swings that range from extreme highs (hyperactivity or mania) to extreme lows (depression) may have bipolar disorder (sometimes called manic depression). Periods of moderate mood often occur in between the extreme highs and lows.

During manic phases, children or teens may talk nonstop, need very little sleep and show unusually poor judgment. At the low end of the mood swing, they experience severe depression.

Bipolar mood swings can recur throughout life. Adults with bipolar disorder (about one in 100) often experienced their first symptoms during their teenage years.

Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Young people with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder are unable to focus their attention and are often impulsive and easily distracted.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder occurs in up to five of every 100 children.

Most kids with this disorder have great difficulty remaining still, taking turns and keeping quiet. Symptoms must be evident in at least two settings, such as home and school, in order for it to be diagnosed.

Learning Disorders

Difficulties that make it harder for kids to receive or express information could be a sign of a learning disorder. Learning disorders can show up as problems with spoken and written language, coordination, attention or self-control.

Conduct Disorder

Young people with conduct disorder usually have little concern for others and repeatedly violate their basic rights and the rules of society. It causes children and adolescents to act out their feelings or impulses in destructive ways.

The offenses these children and adolescents commit often grow more serious over time. Such offenses may include lying, stealing, aggressiveness, truancy, the setting of fires and vandalism. .

Eating Disorders

Children or adolescents who are intensely afraid of gaining weight and do not believe that they are underweight may have eating disorders. These disorders can also be life threatening.

Young people with anorexia nervosa, for example, have difficulty maintaining a minimum healthy body weight. Anorexia affects one in every 100 to 200 adolescent girls and a smaller number of boys.

Youngsters with bulimia nervosa feel compelled to binge (eat huge amounts of food in one sitting). After a binge, in order to prevent weight gain, they rid their bodies of the food by vomiting, abusing laxatives, taking enemas or exercising obsessively. Rates of bulimia vary from one to three of every 100 young people.

Autism

Children with autism, also called autistic disorder, have problems interacting and communicating with others. This disorder appears before the third birthday, causing children to act inappropriately, often repeating behaviors over long periods of time; some children bang their heads and rock, or spin

objects.

Symptoms range in intensity from mild to severe. Children with autism may have a very limited awareness of others and are at increased risk for other mental disorders. It affects 10 to 12 of every 10,000 children.

Schizophrenia

Young people with schizophrenia have psychotic periods that may involve hallucinations, withdrawal from others and loss of contact with reality. Other symptoms include delusional or disordered thoughts and an inability to experience pleasure. It occurs in about five of every 1,000 children.

Treatment and Research: Sources of Hope

Now, more than ever, there is hope for young people with mental, emotional and behavioral disorders; most of the symptoms and distress associated with them can be alleviated with timely and appropriate treatment.

Researchers are working to gain new insights that will lead to better treatments and cures for these dysfunctions; innovative studies also are exploring new ways of delivering services to prevent and treat them.

Research efforts are expected to lead to more effective use of existing treatments, so children and their families can live happier, healthier and more fulfilling lives.

About the Author

Dr Shery is in Cary, IL, near Algonquin, Crystal Lake, Marengo and Lake-in-the-Hills. He's an expert psychologist. Call 1 847 516 0899 and make an appt or [learn more about counseling](http://www.carypsychology.com) at: <http://www.carypsychology.com>

Source: <http://www.onlineearnings.net>