



Signs and symptoms of common mental ill-health conditions

Depression

- Feeling sad or having a depressed mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Changes in appetite - weight loss or gain unrelated to dieting
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Loss of energy or increased fatigue
- Increase in purposeless physical activity (e.g., hand-wringing or pacing) or slowed movements and speech (actions observable by others)
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating or making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Anxiety

- Palpitations, pounding heart or rapid heart rate
- Sweating
- Trembling or shaking
- Feeling of shortness of breath or smothering sensations
- Chest pain
- Feeling dizzy, light-headed or faint
- Feeling of choking
- Numbness or tingling
- Chills or hot flashes
- Nausea or abdominal pains

Obsessive-compulsive disorders

Compulsions are repetitive behaviours or mental acts that a person feels driven to perform in response to an obsession. Some examples of compulsions:

- Cleaning to reduce the fear that germs, dirt, or chemicals will “contaminate” them some spend many hours washing themselves or cleaning their surroundings. Some people spend many hours washing themselves or cleaning their surroundings.
- Repeating to dispel anxiety. Some people utter a name or phrase or repeat a behaviour several times. They know these repetitions won’t actually guard against injury but fear harm will occur if the repetitions aren’t done.
- Checking to reduce the fear of harming oneself or others by, for example, forgetting to lock the door or turn off the gas stove, some people develop checking rituals. Some people repeatedly retrace driving routes to be sure they haven’t hit anyone.
- Ordering and arranging to reduce discomfort. Some people like to put objects, such as books in a certain order, or arrange household items “just so,” or in a symmetric fashion.
- Mental compulsions to response to intrusive obsessive thoughts, some people silently pray or say phrases to reduce anxiety or prevent a dreaded future event.

Eating Disorders

Anorexia Nervosa:

People with anorexia nervosa don't maintain a normal weight because they refuse to eat enough, often exercise obsessively, and sometimes force themselves to vomit or use laxatives to lose weight. Over time, the following symptoms may develop as the body goes into starvation:

- Menstrual periods cease
- Hair/nails become brittle
- Skin dries and can take on a yellowish cast
- Internal body temperature falls, causing person to feel cold all the time
- Depression and lethargy
- Issues with self-image/body dysmorphia

Bulimia Nervosa:

Patients binge eat frequently, and then purge by throwing up or using a laxative.

- Chronically inflamed and sore throat
- Salivary glands in the neck and below the jaw become swollen; cheeks and face often become puffy
- Tooth enamel wears off; teeth begin to decay from exposure to stomach acids
- Constant vomiting causes gastroesophageal reflux disorder
- Severe dehydration from purging of fluids

Self Harm

- Scars
- Fresh cuts, scratches, bruises or other wounds
- Excessive rubbing of an area to create a burn
- Keeping sharp objects on hand
- Wearing long sleeves or long trousers, even in hot weather
- Difficulties in interpersonal relationships
- Persistent questions about personal identity, such as "Who am I?" "What am I doing here?"
- Behavioural and emotional instability, impulsivity and unpredictability
- Statements of helplessness, hopelessness or worthlessness
- Head banging
- Ingesting toxic substances.

Key Points to Remember:

- Negative presentations can represent the normal range of human emotions. Everyone feels sad, worried, shy or self-conscious at times and these do not necessarily mean that a child or young person is experiencing mental ill-health.
- Avoid using diagnostic terminology when speaking to parents and pupils, such as 'depressed' or 'anxiety.'
- There may be other symptoms that are not on this list- you should use your judgement.
- Any issues noticed should be discussed with parents, the pupil if applicable, classroom staff, and then any decision or actions recorded on CPOMS under the category Wellbeing.
- If you feel there may be an urgent safeguarding issue or concern you should notify the Safeguarding Lead immediately, or the Deputy Lead or Principal in their absence.

