



## Signs and symptoms of common mental ill-health conditions

<p><b>Depression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling sad or having a depressed mood</li> <li>• Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed</li> <li>• Changes in appetite — weight loss or gain unrelated to dieting</li> <li>• Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much</li> <li>• Loss of energy or increased fatigue</li> <li>• Increase in purposeless physical activity (e.g., hand-wringing or pacing) or slowed movements and speech (actions observable by others)</li> <li>• Feeling worthless or guilty</li> <li>• Difficulty thinking, concentrating or making decisions</li> <li>• Thoughts of death or suicide</li> </ul>	<p><b>Anxiety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Palpitations, pounding heart or rapid heart rate</li> <li>• Sweating</li> <li>• Trembling or shaking</li> <li>• Feeling of shortness of breath or smothering sensations</li> <li>• Chest pain</li> <li>• Feeling dizzy, light-headed or faint</li> <li>• Feeling of choking</li> <li>• Numbness or tingling</li> <li>• Chills or hot flashes</li> <li>• Nausea or abdominal pains</li> </ul>
<p><b>Obsessive-compulsive disorders</b></p> <p>Compulsions are repetitive behaviours or mental acts that a person feels driven to perform in response to an obsession. Some examples of compulsions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Mental compulsions to response to intrusive obsessive thoughts, some people silently pray or say phrases to reduce anxiety or prevent a dreaded future event.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eating Disorders</b></p> <p><b>Anorexia Nervosa:</b> 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Menstrual periods cease</li> <li>• Hair/nails become brittle</li> <li>• Skin dries and can take on a yellowish cast</li> <li>• Internal body temperature falls, causing person to feel cold all the time</li> <li>• Depression and lethargy</li> <li>• Issues with self-image /body dysmorphia</li> </ul> <p><b>Bulimia Nervosa:</b> Patients binge eat frequently, and then purge by throwing up or using a laxative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronically inflamed and sore throat</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Constant vomiting causes gastroesophageal reflux disorder</li> <li>• Severe dehydration from purging of fluids</li> </ul>



## Leading a Mentally Healthy School

### ADHD:

- Doesn't pay close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in school or job tasks.
- Has problems staying focused on tasks or activities, such as during lectures, conversations or long reading.
- Does not seem to listen when spoken to (i.e. seems to be elsewhere).
- Does not follow through on instructions and doesn't complete schoolwork, chores or job duties (may start tasks but quickly loses focus).
  - Has problems organizing tasks and work (for instance, does not manage time well; has messy, disorganized work; misses deadlines).
  - Avoids or dislikes tasks that require sustained mental effort, such as preparing reports and completing forms.
  - Often loses things needed for tasks or daily life, such as school papers, books, keys, wallet, cell phone and eyeglasses.
  - Is easily distracted.
  - Fidgets with or taps hands or feet, or squirms in seat.
  - Not able to stay seated (in classroom, workplace).
  - Runs about or climbs where it is inappropriate.
  - Unable to play or do leisure activities quietly.
  - Always "on the go," as if driven by a motor.
  - Talks too much.
  - Blurts out an answer before a question has been finished (for instance may finish people's sentences, can't wait to speak in conversations).
  - Has difficulty waiting his or her turn, such as while waiting in line.
  - Interrupts or intrudes on others (for instance, cuts into conversations, games or activities, or starts using other people's things without permission).

### Autism:

- Communication problems: including difficulty using or understanding language. Some children with autism focus their attention and conversation on a few topic areas, some frequently repeat phrases and some have very limited speech.
- Difficulty relating to people, things and events: including trouble making friends and interacting with people, difficulty reading facial expressions and not making eye contact.
- Repetitive body movements or behaviours: such as hand flapping or repeating sounds or phrases.
- Limited imagination
- Rigidity of thought
- Hypersensitive to some sensory input e.g. sound, touch

### 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.
- Whilst it is important to be aware of potential warning signs, it is crucial to stress that diagnoses need to be made by appropriately qualified clinicians, who use a full range of internationally agreed criteria, not by education professionals.
- It is counter-productive for non-clinicians to use diagnostic terminology, which may not subsequently be confirmed, with parents or young people.