

Children's Mental Health During COVID-19

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Table of Contents

Introduction 01

What is Children's Mental Health? What are the different types of mental disorders?

Epidemiology 02

Who is affected? What are some factors that are associated with psychological disorders?

Mental Health During COVID-19 03

How has the pandemic impacted children's mental health?

Resources 04

A list of resources to learn more about children's psychiatric disorders and/or to find help for yourself, a friend, or a family member.



01 Introduction

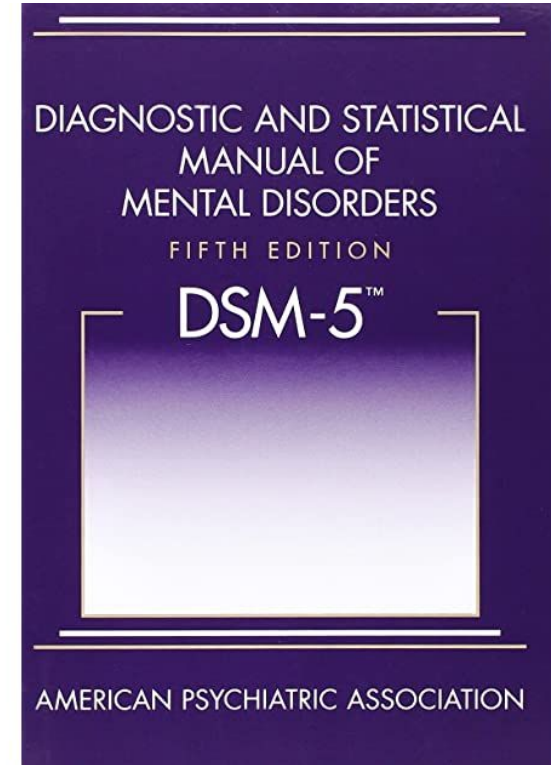


What is Children's Mental Health?

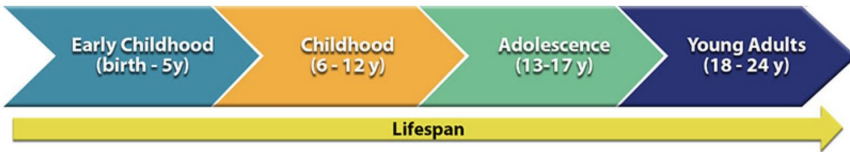
Mental health is not simply the absence of a mental disorder. Children who don't have a mental disorder might differ in how well they are doing, and children who have the same diagnosed mental disorder might differ in their strengths and weaknesses in how they are developing and coping, and in their quality of life. Mental health as a continuum and the identification of specific mental disorders are both ways to understand how well children are doing.

Children's Mental Disorders

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)
- Conduct Disorder (CD)
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Eating Disorders (ED)
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- More defined in the DSM-5...



Mental disorders among children are described as serious changes in the way children typically learn, behave, or handle their emotions, causing distress and problems getting through the day.



02 Epidemiology



Who is Affected?

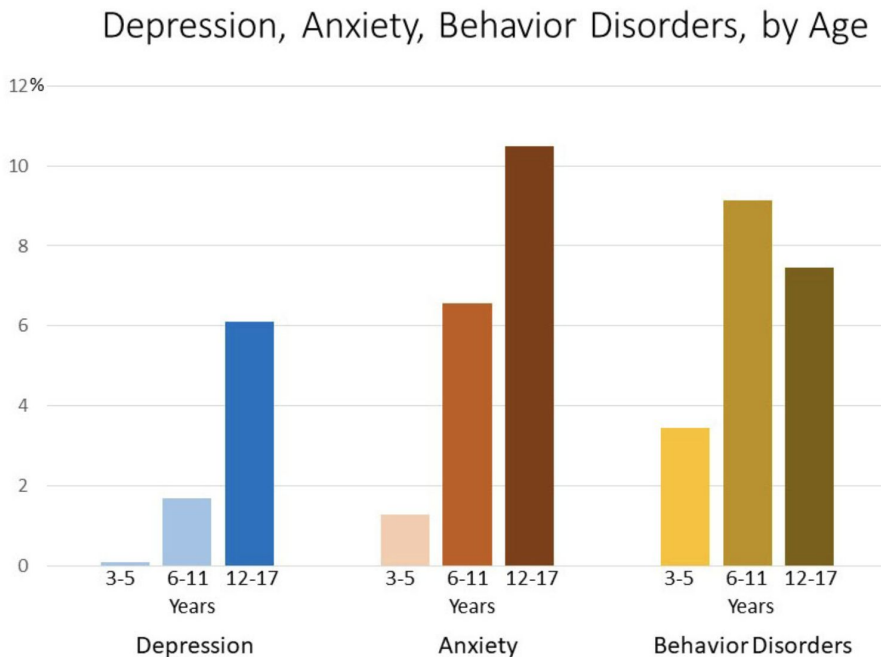
Boys and girls of all ages and ethnic/racial backgrounds and living in all regions of the world experience mental disorders.

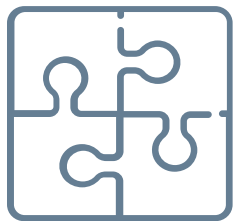
Prior to COVID-19, the international prevalence of child and adolescent mental illness, across all mental disorders, was 13.4%

Based on the [National Research Council and Institute of Medicine report external icon](#), it is estimated that in 2007, 13–20% of children living in the United States (up to 1 out of 5 children) experienced a mental disorder in a given year.

Most Commonly Diagnosed Mental Disorders in Children

- ADHD
 - 9.4% of children aged 2-17 years (~ 6.1 million)
- Behavior Problems
 - 7.4% of children aged 3-17 years (~ 4.5 million)
- Anxiety
 - 7.1% of children aged 3-17 years (~ 4.4 million)
- Depression
 - 3.2% of children aged 3-17 years (~ 1.9 million)





Risk Factors Associated with Psychological Disorders

Biophysical

- Family history
- Complications during pregnancy/birth
- Chronic medical condition

Psychological

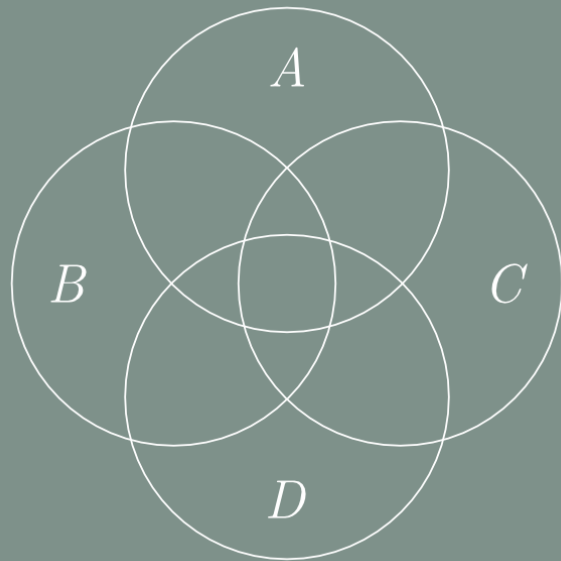
- Stressful life situations
- Traumatic life experiences
- Low self-esteem, negative view of life

Social

- Being abused or neglected as a child
- Poor social skills
- Lack of access to support services

Spiritual

- Perception of insignificance
- Perception of being irredeemable or inherently flawed
- Conflicting thoughts or doubts surrounding deep religious beliefs



ADOPT PROTECTIVE FACTORS TO FACE CHALLENGES

BEHAVIOURAL CHALLENGES



Behavioural
problems



Conflicts with
friends or family



Turning to drugs
and alcohol



Physical
activity



Emotional
support



Social
activities



RESILIENCE



Skill
development



Proper
nutrition



Adequate
sleep

LIFE CHALLENGES



Covid-19:
uncertainty
and adaptation



Stress of
studies



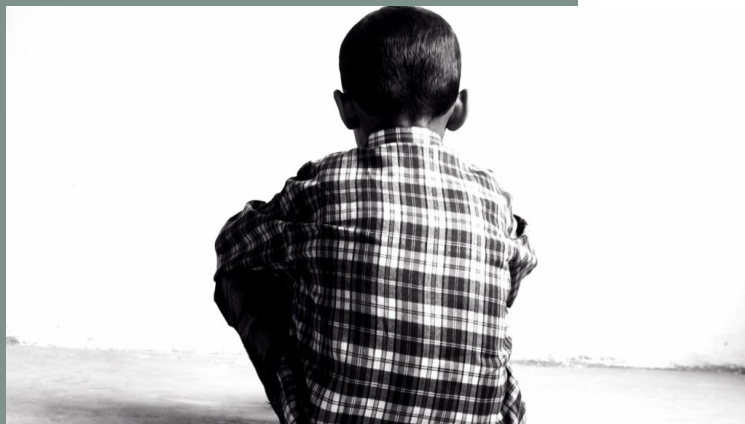
Anxiety and
depression

For protective factors at the family and
community levels, visit nbhc.ca/resilience



New Brunswick
Health Council

Conseil de la santé
du Nouveau-Brunswick



03

Mental Health During COVID-19

Impact of COVID-19



Changes in their routines (e.g., having to physically distance from family and friends)



Breaks in continuity of health care (e.g., missed well-child visits, limited access to mental, speech, and occupational health services)



Lost security and safety (e.g., housing and food insecurity, increased exposure to violence, uncertainty for the future)



Breaks in continuity of learning (e.g., virtual learning environments, technology access and connectivity issues)



Missed significant life events (e.g., grief of missing celebrations, vacation plans, and/or milestone life events)

Increased Mental Health Pediatric Emergency Visits During COVID-19

Beginning in April 2020, the proportion of children's mental health-related ED visits among all pediatric ED visits increased and remained elevated through October. Compared with 2019, the proportion of mental health-related visits for children aged 5–11 and 12–17 years increased approximately 24% and 31%, respectively.



Recognizing Mental Distress

Infants, toddlers and young children

May show backward progress in skills and developmental milestones. They may also have increased problems with:

- Fussiness and irritability
- Falling asleep and waking up more during the night
- Hitting, frustration, biting, and more frequent or intense tantrums
- Betweeing after being potty-trained
- Urgently expressed needs while seemingly unable to feel satisfied
- Conflict and aggression or themes like illness or death during play

Older children and adolescents

May show signs of distress with symptoms such as:

- Problems with memory, thinking, or concentration
- Changes in mood that are not usually for your child, such as ongoing irritability, feelings of hopeless, and frequent conflicts
- Changes in behavior, such as stepping back from personal relationships
- Changes in appetite, weight or eating patterns
- An increase in risky or reckless behaviors

What you can do

Parents

Talk to your child's healthcare professional if you have concerns about the way your child behaves at home, in school, or with friends.

Youth

If you are angry, worried or sad, don't be afraid to talk about your feelings and reach out to a trusted friend or adult.



Healthcare Professionals

Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment based on updated guidelines are very important.

Teachers/school administrators

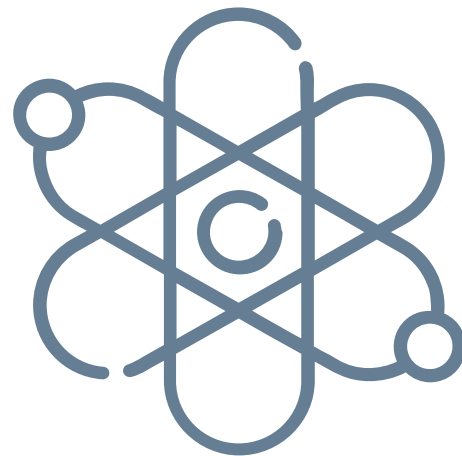
Early identification is important so that children can get the help they need. Work with families and healthcare professionals if you have concerns about the mental health of a child in your school.



04 Resources

Resources

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at www.aacap.org
- Child Mind Institute at www.childmind.org
- Children's Mental Health Network at www.cmhnetwork.org
- Kids Mental Health Information Portal: www.kidsmentalhealth.org
- National Institute of Mental Health at www.nimh.nih.gov
- Psych Central at www.psychcentral.com/disorders
- SAMHSA, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Administration at: www.samhsa.gov
- Teen Health at: <http://kidshealth.org/teen/>





Thanks!

Do you have any questions?
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References

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- <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6945a3.htm>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/basics.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/parental-resource-kit/index.html>
- <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Signs-you-Teen-May-Need-More-Support.aspx>