


SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OVERVIEW

Mental health concerns can be genetic (Biology) or due to a child's life experiences (i.e., Backstory, Biography, or Behaviors). Stress and trauma can reshape pathways in the brain that influence children and adolescents' behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and physical demeanor. The table below overviews common signs and symptoms of some of the most prevalent mental health concerns affecting children and adolescents in the United States.

| | DEPRESSION | ANXIETY | SUICIDAL IDEATION |
|--|--|--|---|
|  BEHAVIOR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not going out anymore • Not getting things done at work/school • Withdrawing from others • Substance/alcohol use • Unable to concentrate • Not doing usual fun activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawing from or fearing certain objects or situations • Urges to perform rituals • Not being assertive (i.e., avoiding eye contact) • Difficulty making decisions • Cautious due to feeling unsafe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatening to kill oneself • Looking for things like pills or weapons • Talking or writing about death • Withdrawing from others • Packing/giving things away • Substance/alcohol use |
|  FEELINGS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overwhelmed • Guilty • Irritable, frustrated • Lacking confidence, indecision • Disappointed • Pessimistic • Sad, miserable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overwhelmed • Fearful • Excessive worry about physical body • Dread of something bad • Constantly tense, nervous • Uncontrollable panic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hopelessness • Rage, anger, seeking revenge • Anxious • Unable to sleep or sleeping all the time • Dramatic changes in mood |
|  THOUGHTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I'm a failure" • "It's my fault" • "Nothing good ever happens to me" • "I'm worthless" • "Life's not worth living" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I'm going crazy" • "I can't control myself" • "I'm about to die" • "People are judging me" • Unwanted/intrusive thoughts • Upsetting dreams/flashbacks • Feeling detached from self | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling trapped, like there's no way out • No reason for living, no sense of purpose in life • "Life's not worth living" • "People are better off without me" |
|  PHYSICAL SIGNS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tired all the time • Sick and run down • Headaches and muscle pains • Churning gut • Sleep problems • Loss or change of appetite • Significant weight loss/gain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased heart rate, sweating • Shortness of breath • Hot/cold flushes • Dizzy, lightheaded, or faint • Trouble sleeping • Nausea or vomiting • Muscle tension and pain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tired all the time • Trouble sleeping • Telling someone (typically week before attempt) • Changes in posts on social media • Giving things away |

(MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID, 2022)

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WELLNESS CHECK-IN IDEAS FOR COACHES

Coaches often check-in with student-athletes who are dealing with injuries, recovering from concussions, or struggling with academic issues. Coaches then utilize this information to link and refer student-athletes to needed supports (i.e., athletic trainers, doctors, caregivers, teachers, etc.). Comparably, coaches can utilize wellness check-ins to acknowledge student-athletes stressors, identify signs and symptoms of persistent stress, and connect athletes to mental health personnel, supports, or services. Wellness check-ins give coaches opportunities to follow-up in safe and supportive ways (i.e., "I noticed during our check-in you...").

Recommended as "Think (Individually), Pair (With a Safe Peer), Share" Activities at the Start of Practice

Bus Visualization

- Question: Where are you sitting on the bus, and why?
- Example: "I'm sitting in the [front of the bus, middle, back, hanging on to the bus, or chasing after the bus] because..."



Weather Report

- Question: What is your weather report, and why?
- Example: "I'm feeling 68 and cloudy today because..."



Battery

- Question: How charged is your battery, and why?
- Examples: "I'm feeling about 40% charged because..."



Emojis

- Question: What emoji describes how you're feeling, and why?
- Example: "I feel like the yawn emoji because..."



Sport-Specific Examples

- Football: What down and yard are you feeling like, and why? (i.e., "I feel like 3rd and 8 because...")
- Volleyball: Describe how you're feeling like a ball on a serve, and why? (i.e., "I keep hitting the net because...")