

WHEN YOUR CHILD MAY NEED HELP

Common Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Disorders

ADJUSTMENT DISORDER (AD)

The issues that arise because of a divorce can often put a lot of stress on children. An adjustment disorder is a powerful reaction to a stressor, such as divorce. In general, patients will have substantial distress that is in excess of what should be expected from a certain type of stress. Due to the many ways adults and children respond to stress, numerous subtypes of adjustment disorders have been documented.

For further information on Adjustment Disorder:

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000932.htm

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

It is estimated that 3 to 5 percent of children in the United States suffer from some degree of ADHD. Inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity are the hallmarks that comprise a diagnosis for ADHD, but some children (and adults) are primarily inattentive.

For further information on ADHD:

www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder/complete-index.shtml

BIPOLAR DISORDER

Children and adolescents may exude severe moodiness, switching between aggression and high-energy behaviors to frank depressive episodes. Psychiatrists are only now better realizing what this problem appears like in childhood and especially in adolescence, where it has been found to be more common than once thought.

For further information on Bipolar Disorder:

www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=By_Illness&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=13107

DYSTHYMIC DISORDER

This common type of depression is low-grade and affects both children and adults; it can also sometimes progress to major depression or other mood disorders.

For further information on Dysthymic Disorder:

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000918.htm

EATING DISORDERS

There are two main types of eating disorders: anorexia and bulimia. Both are marked by destructive eating habits. Frequently, eating disorders will manifest in conjunction with another psychological disorder such as depression or anxiety disorders. These disorders predominantly occur in women; 85 to 95 percent of people with anorexia and 65 to 70 percent of bulimia patients are women. In the case of young people, bulimia affects one to three of every 100 adolescents, while anorexia affects one of every 100 to 200 adolescent girls.

For further information on Eating Disorders:

www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/eating-disorders/complete-index.shtml

LEARNING DISORDERS

These disorders affect how a person understands, responds, and remembers information. Although the disorder can manifest in preschoolers, learning disorders are usually not diagnosed until the child is of school age. In one third of cases, children with learning disorders also have ADHD. There are a number of types of learning disorders, but four that stand out are language disorders, reading disorders, math disorders, and executive functioning disorder.

For further information on Learning Disorders:

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/learningdisorders.html

MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

This type of depression is so severe that it has the potential to undermine every facet of a child's life from academic performance to interaction with others. Studies indicate that as many as one in every ten children suffer from major depressive disorder at some point. This type of depression can manifest as a single episode or be recurrent.

For further information on Major Depressive Disorder:

www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/CA-0011/default.asp

PANIC DISORDER

Panic disorder is an anxiety disorder and is identified by unexpected and repeated episodes of intense fear accompanied by physical distress. These episodes are called "panic attacks" and can last anywhere from minutes to hours depending upon the degree of severity. More than 3 million Americans will suffer from panic disorder in their lifetime. In many cases, agoraphobia, or the fear of outside environments, can also accompany panic disorder.

For further information on Panic Disorder:

www.aacap.org/page.ww?name=Panic+Disorder+in+Children+and+Adolescents§ion=Facts+for+Families

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER (OCD)

Recurrent behaviors and thoughts that interfere with everyday life are classified as OCD. In the United States, it is reported that as many as one in two hundred adolescents suffer from obsessive compulsive disorder.

For further information on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder:

www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/obsessivecompulsive_disorder_in_children_and_adolescents

OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER (ODD)

Although children may be insubordinate from time to time, frequent and consistent disobedience with authority figures can potentially be diagnosed as ODD. The frequency of this disorder rivals ADHD in the population.

For further information on ODD:

www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/children_with_oppositional_defiant_disorder

PERVASIVE DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDER

Disorders classified as Pervasive Developmental Disorders deal with irregularities in social and communication skills in individuals. These include diagnoses such as Autism and Asperger's Disorder. The average onset of such disorders is approximately three years of age; however, parents may observe irregular behavior as early as infancy.

For further information on Pervasive Developmental Disorder:

www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/pdd/pdd.htm

PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS

These disorders are very unusual in children and uncommon in teenagers. Individuals with psychotic disorders have abnormal perceptions and thoughts. They have an altered sense of reality and will often suffer from delusions or hallucinations. Delusions occur when an individual with a psychotic disorder will believe inaccurate information even when presented with the truth; hallucinations deal with the sensory facet of the individual. People who suffer from hallucinations will often hear or see things that are not present.

For further information on Psychotic Disorders:

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/psychoticdisorders.html

REACTIVE ATTACHMENT DISORDER (IN YOUNG CHILDREN)

This unfortunate mental disorder occurs when young children do not form a healthy bond with their caregivers. Usually, Reactive Attachment Disorder takes place in abusive environments or environments of neglect. It can sometimes be found in adopted children.

For further information on Reactive Attachment Disorder:

www.aacap.org/cs/root/facts_for_families/reactive_attachment_disorder

SEPARATION ANXIETY DISORDER

Parents are usually the primary caregivers for their children, creating a powerful attachment bond. Within a divorce, a prolonged or abrupt separation from a caring adult can cause stress and the child may respond in the form of separation anxiety disorder. Statistically, one in twenty-five children have separation anxiety disorder. This disorder manifests once a specific person leaves the presence of the child.

For further information on Separation Anxiety Disorder:

www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/CA-0007/default.asp

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