



WARNING SIGNS

of Mental Health Conditions

- ⚠ Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than 2 weeks
- ⚠ Severe, out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors that cause harm to self or others
- ⚠ Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort or fast breathing
- ⚠ Seeing, hearing or believing things that aren't real
- ⚠ Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits
- ⚠ Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still that puts a person in physical danger or causes school failure
- ⚠ Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
- ⚠ Throwing up, using laxatives or not eating to lose weight; significant weight loss or weight gain
- ⚠ Using alcohol or drugs excessively
- ⚠ Trying to harm oneself, attempt suicide or making plans to do so

SIGNS OF BEING BULLIED

- **Recognize the warning signs:**
 - Unexplainable injuries
 - Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics or jewelry
 - Feeling sick or faking illness
 - Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
 - Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
 - **Learn what bullying IS and what it IS NOT**
 - **Cyberbullying**
- Learn how to prevent it and how to address it if it occurs

SIGNS OF BULLYING OTHERS

- Gets into physical or verbal fights
- Has friends who bully others
- Is increasingly aggressive
- Gets sent to the principal's office or to detention frequently
- Has unexplained extra money or new belongings
- Blames others for their problems
- Doesn't accept responsibility for their actions
- Is competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity

(Source: The Relationship Between Bullying and Suicide: What we know and what it means for school, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control)

SIGNS OF SUICIDE

- Talking, writing or drawing about death
- Talking about:
 - Having no reason to live
 - Being a burden to others
 - Not being here tomorrow
- Feeling hopeless, desperate or trapped
- Looking for ways to attempt suicide
- Giving away possessions
- Loss of interest in the things they care about
- Behaving recklessly
- Anger, irritability, violence

WHAT **NOT** TO SAY TO YOUR CHILD

- **DON'T** dismiss how they're feeling as routine or as something that will get better on its own
"We all go through times like these. You'll be fine."
- **DON'T** ask questions that will only give you a yes/no answer
"Are you OK?"
"Are you having any problems?"
- **DON'T** ask in a way that indicates you want "no" as an answer
"You're not feeling anxious about going to school, are you?"
- **DON'T** promise confidentiality



TIPS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT THEIR MENTAL HEALTH

- Choose a time to talk when your child feels safe and comfortable. Maybe involve an activity, like going out to eat lunch, when you're done
- Communicate in a calm and straightforward way, prepare to do more listening than talking
- Speak at a level that's appropriate to your child's age and development level (preschool children need fewer details than teenagers)
- Watch your child's reactions and slow down or restate if your child becomes confused or looks upset
- Listen openly and let your child tell you about their feelings and worries. If talking is difficult ask them to write something or share an example or depending on age draw something.



SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR ADDRESSING YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS IN SCHOOL

Could we work together to meet my child's needs?

- Include what the teacher has found to be successful. Make it strengths based and empowering

Do all staff working with my child know about their needs?

- Including other staff members who have observed your child in the classroom and could share their ideas of what could help with student success

Are there any areas where my child is making progress?

- Make time to focus on the positive and re-affirm this to improve the student's self-esteem

What strategies are in place or could be in place to help my child?

- Discuss what has been used and what is available, maybe even include the student

When can we meet again?

- Recognize that emails and phone calls/texts can happen between meetings when questions or concerns arise

May I have a copy?

- Make copies for everyone involved and think about making a timeline to keep everyone on track

Crisis Connections

- **24 Hour Crisis Line – 1-866-4CRISIS or 206-461-3222**
- **Teen Link – 1-866-TEENLINK**
- **WA Recovery Help Line – 1-866-789-1511**
- **WA Warm Line – 1-877-500-WARM (9276)**

King County – 211

Information & referrals to community services

Community Living Connections – 1-844-348-5464

National Suicide Prevention Helpline: (800) 273-8255

Text NAMI to 741741 Crisis Text Line

NAMI Eastside - www.nami-eastside.org info@nami-eastside.org