




A Child's Mental Health

Tiffany N. Hendershot, MSW, LICSW
Behavior Support Specialist
Eastern Panhandle Region



Overview

- Recognize signs and symptoms of mental health problems that may impact children
- Understand the 4 A's (Attachment, ACEs, ADHD, and Anxiety)
- Strategies to effectively work with students with mental health conditions



What are Mental Disorders in Children?

Affects the child's thinking, emotional state, and behavior

Disrupts the child's ability to:

Attend school/Head Start/Daycare	Complete daily activities	Develop healthy relationships
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Why is Children's Mental Health Important



Mental health problems in children are common.

75% of mental health problems develop during childhood and adolescence.

The child's brain is developing at a rapid rate.

Stigma and Culture

Professional help is not always available or desired

Commonly Diagnosed Mental Disorders in Children

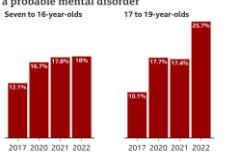
Mental Health Changes Since COVID-19

Mental health

39% of 6-16 year olds experienced a deterioration from 2017-21, while 22% saw improvement	53% of 17-23 year olds experienced a deterioration from 2017-21, while 15% saw improvement
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Percentage of children and young people with a probable mental disorder

Seven to 16-year-olds 17 to 19-year-olds



Age Group	2017	2020	2021	2022
Seven to 16-year-olds	13.1%	14.2%	13.8%	13%
17 to 19-year-olds	10.1%	11.7%	11.6%	13.7%

Source: NHS Digital

Physical Signs and Symptoms of a Child MH Disorder

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- Frequent headaches/stomachaches
- Sleepy, tired
- Increased hunger or thirst
- Unkempt, disheveled
- Appear tense, worried



Behavioral Signs and Symptoms of a Child MH Disorder

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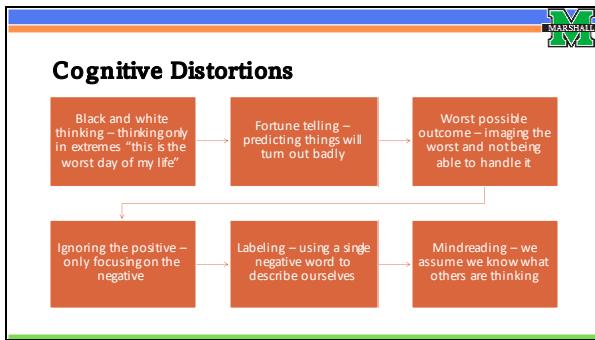
- Difficulty separating at drop-off; lots of absences
- Frequent visits to nurse's office with vague physical complaints
- Difficulty participating in class (hand raising, head on desk)
- Tantrums and anger outbursts
- Reassurance seeking (If I eat this will I get sick? Is this ok to do?)
- Perfectionism (lots of erasing, ripping paper if made a mistake)
- Distractibility and hyperactivity
- Withdrawing from activities, peers, or school
- Changes in eating/sleeping habits
- Showing excessive fear of something (dogs, dark)

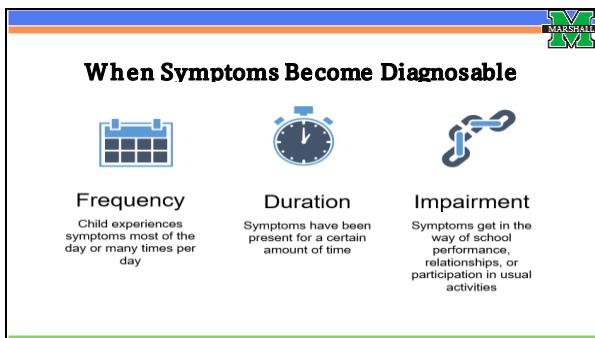
Emotional Signs and Symptoms of a Child MH Disorder

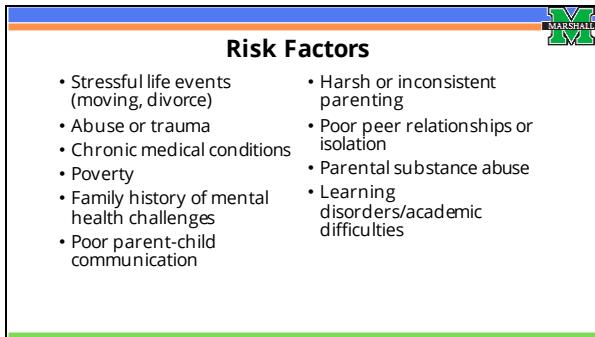
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- Excessive irritability or anger
- Mood swings
- Sadness, tearfulness
- Excessive anxiety or worry
- Excessive pessimism
- Low self-esteem
- Restlessness/tension









Protective Factors

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- Regular attendance
- Emotional literacy
- Good social support
- Economic security
- Activities outside the home
- Feeling close to at least one adult
- Ability to control and regulate emotions
- Social problem-solving skills

- Having and using coping strategies
- Flexibility
- High self-esteem
- Good problem-solving skills
- Spirituality
- Consistent home routine
- Support from family, friends and clergy

NAS in West Virginia

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Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome(NAS)
A pregnant woman's druguse during pregnancy causes an infant to go through withdrawal after birth.

Children with NAS may have:
Vision and hearing issues
Feeding and gastrointestinal issues
Fine and gross motor delays
Sensory processing problems (maypresent as behavior issues)
Executive functioning problems

NAS data for 2017 shows the overall incidence rate was 50.6 cases per 1,000 live births (0.08%) for West Virginia residents (WV DHHR, 2017) highest in the nation.
The national average was 7 cases per 1,000.

West Virginia: Rate of NAS per 1,000 newborn hospitalizations by All NAS, 2009 to 2017

Year	Rate (per 1,000)
2009	~10
2010	~12
2011	~15
2012	~18
2013	~22
2014	~25
2015	~30
2016	~45
2017	~35

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP), State Inpatient Databases (SID) 2009 to 2017. Data are preliminary as of 10/26/2017. All measures fully measured abstinence syndrome.

Children born in 2017 started Kindergarten this school year.

The Four A's

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- Attachment
- ACES
- ADHD
- Anxiety

How is an attachment formed?

Infant is upset or scared (limbic activates) >
adult soothes (builds connection) >
limbic system calms >
relays safety to prefrontal cortex

• Caregiver offers warmth, comfort, food and infant learns to trust that their needs will be met. Secure Attachment is created.

*Prefrontal Cortex is developed through a secure attachment relationship**




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SOME "SYMPTOMS" SPECIFIC TO THE TYPE OF ATTACHMENT DISORDER

ANXIOUS overtly clinging superficially compliant "sell their souls" for acceptance openly destructive if told "no"	AVOIDANT isolated & don't care feel omnipotent, over independent sullen, openly oppositional in a passive-aggressive way
AMBIVALENT openly angry and defiant destructive – things, people, pets can't give and receive affection unless they want something dangerous impulsive risk takers	DISORGANISED "variety of symptoms- behaviour is grossly disorganized, bizarre and has features of the other 3 at various times often for no apparent reason"

Taken from "Children Who Shock and Surprise: A Guide to Attachment Disorders" by Elizabeth Randolph

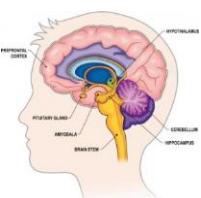
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Why do students with chronic stress end up in the office?

Chronic Toxic Stress leads to an overactive limbic system and immature pre-frontal cortex.
The pre-frontal cortex is responsible for:

- Focusing Attention
- Predicting Consequences
- Impulse Control
- Anticipating Events
- Managing Emotional Reactions

Do you know any students with an overactive limbic system and immature pre-frontal cortex?
Is that how we view them?



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ACES at School

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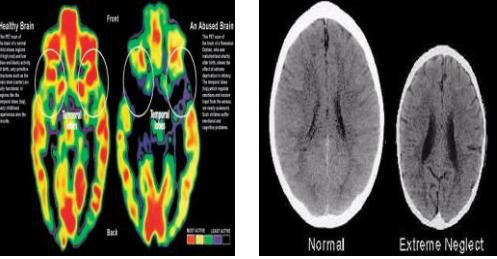
- ACEs are the single greatest predictor for health, attendance and behavior.
- ACEs are the second strongest predictor for academic failure, after special education status.
- **56%** of children with an ACE score of **4+** had learning and behavior problems in school compared with **only 3% of children with an ACE score of ZERO.**

Source: Butte, N.J., Hellman, J.L., Smith, B.G., Wermuth, C.F. & Carlson, V.C. (June 2013). "The Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on an Urban Pediatric Population." Child Abuse and Neglect, 37, No. 6.



Brain Development Disrupted

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Trauma Symptoms:

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Sleep disturbance	Weight gain or loss	Failure to thrive	Enuresis; Encopresis; Constipation	Hair loss
Poor control of chronic disease	Developmental regression	School failure or absenteeism	Aggression	Poor impulse control
Frequent crying	Restricted affect or numbing	High risk behavior in adolescents	Unexplained somatic complaints	Depression
		Anxiety	Interpersonal conflict	

“What is in the Well?”

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the deepest well
HEALING THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY
Dr. NADINE BURKE HARRIS

ADHD Symptoms

Primarily Inattentive Type:

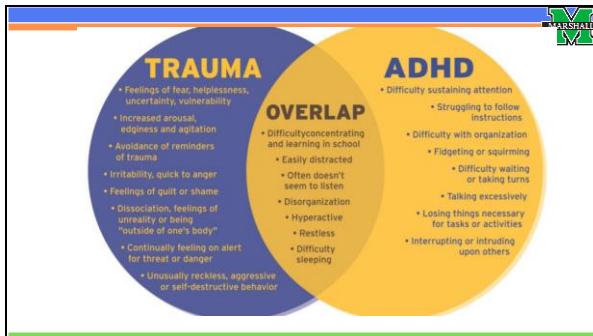
- Doesn't pay attention to detail
- Makes careless mistakes
- Has trouble paying attention
- Has difficulty following instructions.
- Easily distracted
- Forgetful

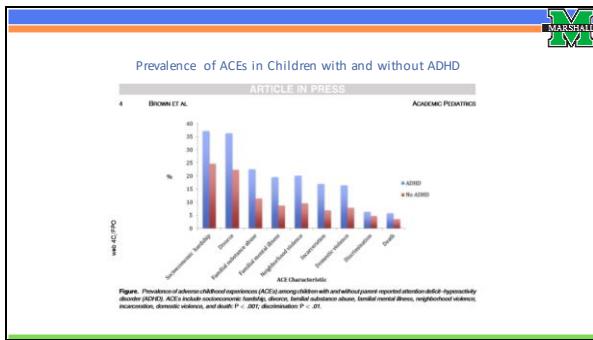
Primarily Hyperactive/Impulsive Type:

- Fidgets
- Squirms in chair
- Runs talks, and climbs excessively
- Blurs out answers
- Has trouble waiting and taking turns

** The combined type displays symptoms of both the Primarily Inattentive Type and the Primarily Hyperactive/Impulsive Type.

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Why is Self-Regulation Important?

- We cannot learn if we are in a stressed state.
- Before we can teach a curriculum, we must teach regulation.

Students who lack self-regulation are 77% less engaged in school. Children with a mental health issue with a strong connection to their parents are over 5x more likely to know how to self-regulate.

January 2022 issue of *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*.

The **ZONES** of Regulation®

BLUE ZONE Sad Tired Bored Moving Slowly	GREEN ZONE Happy Calm Focused Ready to Learn	YELLOW ZONE Feeding Okay Focused Ready to Learn	RED ZONE Frustrated Angry Talkative Moving/Easily

TIPS FOR REGULATION

Provide a weighted pencil	Self-Talk	Play soothing music	Self-Distraction
Play catch	Let students choose where to work	Keep student's hands busy	Deep Breaths
Check-ins			

Strategies to Improve Symptoms at School

- Include books in your library that have characters with big feelings to normalize student's experiences
- Create a worry box for kids to leave their worries at the door
- Have a weekly class mantra or positive affirmation
- Teach **mindfulness activities** such as breathing and "brain breaks" in between lessons.
- Play music that focuses on self-acceptance and esteem
- Ask older students what song they relate to right now
- Don't be afraid to take a reset, they are good for everyone!

Anxious versus Defiant Behavior



- Anxious- Connection and Explanation
- Defiance- Clarity and Absolutes



The 5 C's for Adults to Use

Celebration



Building Skills for Success

More of what works, less of what doesn't	Look for progress, even small	Visual cues	Verbal prompts
Simplify instructions	STRENGTH BASED – notice efforts	Allow extra time for packing up	Set aside time for organization (desk, locker, notebooks)



Executive Functioning

Coordinates thoughts, feelings, and actions	3-year lag for students with ADHD	More challenges than strengths
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Resources

- <https://wvde.us/reclaimwv>
- https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/ReClaimWV_Toolkit-FEB2020.pdf
- <https://www.help4ww.com/>
- <https://www.wvaces.org/>
- <http://preventsuicidewv.org/>



QR Code



Thank you so much for all that you do for our students!

We appreciate each of you!

Take care of yourself this summer!

Tiffany
