

7 Things Parents Need to Know about Mental Health



1. You're not alone.

If you're concerned about your child's mental health or emotional wellbeing, you're not alone. Mental health concerns are common for children and adults. About 1 in 5 children have a mental health disorder. The good news is that these disorders are treatable, and people do recover!

2. It's no one's fault.

Parents often wonder how their child could have developed a problem with their mental or emotional health, and sometimes they feel guilty. But there are many risk factors, such as genetics, stress, or medical conditions, that can contribute to the development of a mental health concern, and no one is to blame.

3. People do get better.

We know that we can recover from colds, flu and more serious physical illnesses, but when it comes to mental health disorders, we often worry that the problem will become a life-long condition. With the right treatment, people do recover from mental disorders. And, just like treating other illnesses, we have a better chance for a full recovery if we get help sooner, rather than later.

4. Don't wait to get help.

It's easier to treat a cold than to treat pneumonia. It's also easier to treat a mild anxiety disorder than a disorder that has developed into something serious, or possibly debilitating. With treatment, young people can not only get better, but can learn about their challenges to become stronger and more resilient as they continue to grow and mature.

5. There are resources to help you get the help your child needs.

When parents have concerns, a physical exam is a good place to start. Your doctor may offer some information about obtaining mental health care, but if you have medical insurance, you may also call the number on the back of your insurance card. Chester County residents can also call Chesco LIFE for free assistance navigating the mental health and other child-serving systems. The program is staffed by caring, experienced parents. Call 484-348-6392.

6. Pennsylvania residents have more options.

Many people don't know that in PA most children under age 19 who have a mental health diagnosis qualify for Medical Assistance, or Medicaid, *regardless of their family's income*. Most states don't offer this option for residents, but families across PA use it to cover mental health treatment options not covered by private insurance. You may even use your private insurance for primary coverage, and only use Medical Assistance when a type of treatment, such as case management or family-based service, is accessed. You can apply for Medical Assistance online by completing the COMPASS application at the website: www.compass.state.pa.us/Compass.Web/public/cmphome.

7. Get immediate help for a mental health crisis.

Valley Creek Crisis Intervention is Chester County's crisis hotline. The free service is available to anyone experiencing a mental health concern or crisis, regardless of insurance and income, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 610-280-3270 or toll free at 877-918-2100.



From Chester County Department of Mental Health /Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Find out more at our website: www.chesco.org/mhidd