

Behavior and Mental Health

Some behavioral challenges in children and teens may arise from underlying mental health needs.

Children and teens are at risk of experiencing mental illness just like adults.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 13–20% of children in the United

States experience a mental health disorder each year. Depression is one of the top five mental

disorders in children and teens and, left untreated, can put youth at risk for thoughts of self-harm

or suicide. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people ages 10 to 34.

Depression isn't just sadness. Depression is a persistent feeling of sadness or hopelessness and

the timeline for how long these feelings last is different for everyone.

Common symptoms of depression:

- Loss of interest in activities
- Changes in eating habits
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or sadness
- Loss of self-worth and self-esteem

- Suicidal thoughts

If you believe that your child is experiencing depression or any other mental health condition, it's important to reach out to a mental health professional or doctor who can provide support and guidance.

If you would like assistance in reaching out to a mental health provider, please contact your child's school counselor. Hays Middle School has school-based mental health services through High Plains Mental Health Center.

Excerpted from Mental Health Quick Assessment from KVC Health Systems.pdf, www.kvc.org/resourcelibrary