

10 Reasons to Schedule a Therapy Appointment for Your Child

1. Pleas for Help

Young children through adolescents often know they are not well. If your child asks for mental health help or is frequently visiting the school counselor or nurse, it might be a good idea to schedule an initial evaluation with a counselor.

2. Changes

If you have a child who usually enjoys spending time around the family but is retreating to their room every day after school and avoiding interactions, you should ask some questions. While the desire for independence may result in a student enjoying more “alone” time, it should not be a stark difference or total withdrawal. Additionally, a child who is normally quite agreeable but suddenly becomes very angry or accusatory may be struggling. The outbursts are a desperate plea for help. Another area of change to look for is a complete change in social group or recreational activities. For example, a student who changes friend groups or no longer wants to participate in sports may have an underlying issue causing the sudden change.

3. Self-Harm or Abuse

Unexplained or brushed-off explanations regarding scratches, bruises, or other physical injuries can be a sign of a need for support and intervention.

4. Bullying

Listen to your child. If they are frequently talking about others who are antagonizing them, making fun of them, making them feel uncomfortable, or being mean to them, you should intervene and seek help.

5. Heightened Emotions

Heightened emotions can be a sign of anxiety or worry. A child’s coping skills may be reduced if they have an issue they cannot deal with independently. Irritability, restlessness, or anger that does not match the instigating event may indicate the child needs counseling support.

6. School Concerns

A decline in grades or an increase in school discipline should be seriously considered as a factor when deciding if counseling support is needed. Calls from concerned teachers, coaches, or school administrators should be considered seriously.

7. Not Functioning

A child who is frequently truant, late, or unable to participate in school/school activities at a level comparable to peers may indicate a need for an evaluation or counseling care.

8. Trauma

A child who has experienced trauma may need intervention from a helping professional to minimize the adverse effects of the traumatic event. Unresolved or repressed trauma can lead to future difficulties and a lack of overall emotional and physical wellbeing.

9. Abnormal Sleep Patterns

Changes in sleep patterns should be considered a probable reason to pursue therapy. A child who is sleeping or sleepy during normal waking hours may need help. A child who is having difficulty falling asleep, maintaining sleep, or resting may need support. Night terrors, a fear of falling asleep, or bad dreams can also be signs of a need of support.

10. Parental Instinct

As a parent, never underestimate your “gut feelings.” If you feel something is wrong, even if your child assures you they are fine, seek help. You are your child’s best support system and likely know them better than anyone.

Disclaimer: These are general guidelines, not absolutes. If you feel your child is unwell emotionally, take steps to intervene. Call a mental health professional or a pediatrician for an evaluation and recommendations. It is always best to err on the side of caution when mental health needs may be present.