

Supporting a child’s mental health and development is one of the most important, and sometimes most challenging, tasks a parent faces. Young people of all ages rely on positive adult support to develop the skills and mindset to manage their emotions and stressors in healthy ways. While every child is precious and unique, here are common signs they may be struggling and in need of co-regulation, and ideas for providing support.



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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

## HOW TO TELL IF YOUR CHILD IS FEELING...

## YOU MAY NOTICE

## WAYS TO HELP

### LONELY

Changes in sleeping patterns (increased amount of sleep); less optimistic; engaging in risky behaviors; isolating from family; poor self-care; low self-esteem

Decrease social media use (unplug from phone); encourage them to get outside; go for a family walk; find time to have ongoing, meaningful conversations; set up Zoom calls with their friends/extended family

### ANXIOUS

Loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy; difficulty concentrating; extreme mood swings; frequent unexplained physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches, etc.); avoiding people or places; trouble sleeping; shortness of breath

Encourage breathing exercises; have them pick out a journal and encourage them to start writing in it every day; yoga and meditation; avoid saying statements like “stop worrying”; establish a routine

### SAD

Lack of motivation; exhaustion/lack of energy; loss of interest in favorite activities; changes in sleep patterns (more naps, insomnia); low self-esteem; give up easily; withdraw from friends and family

Be an active listener (resist urge to criticize/lecture); acknowledge their feelings (even if they appear irrational to you); encourage social connection; get them moving; continue to check in and be present (physically and emotionally)

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# STRESSED OUT

Frequent headaches and stomachaches; increased irritability; negative self-talk; neglecting responsibilities; social isolation/withdrawal; nightmares/disrupted sleep; inability to control emotions

Combat negative thinking; model healthy coping (manage your own stress); stay calm and positive; encourage physical activity; help them focus on their strengths and do activities that make them happy; watch a movie or listen to music together

# BORED

Distractibility; restlessness; disrupting behaviors; trouble with self-control; may seek out attention in inappropriate ways

Encourage them to pick up a new hobby; arts & crafts; play games – sports, card games, video games, make up your own games; bake or cook together; make to-do lists and help your child plan activities to do in advance; scavenger hunts

# ANGRY

Consistently arguing; getting into fights; inability to cope with their emotions; difficulty with relationships; immature behavior; frequent frustration

Teach anger management techniques (steady breaths, push palms together and release, count to 20, etc.); develop a calm-down plan or encourage them to participate in calming activities (reading, coloring, watching a movie)

# HOPELESS

Oversleeping; isolating; loss of interest in people, places, and things they once loved; lack of hope, optimism, and passion

Set up opportunities for small victories (set small goals); practice gratitude; encourage them to write down all of their strengths; be an active listener; change their environment – get out of the house, move around



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You don't have to do this alone. We are always here. Call us any time, 24/7:

Southwest Missouri:  
**800-494-7355**

Central Missouri:  
**800-395-2132**

Northwest Arkansas:  
**888-518-0108**

The National Crisis Text Line is also available: Text HOME to 741741