

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING THE TREATMENT OF CHILDREN WITH MENTAL DISORDERS

*Children are in a state of rapid change and growth in their developmental years. Diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders must be viewed with these changes in mind. While some problems are short lived and do not need treatment, others are persistent and very serious and parents should seek professional help for their child.*

**Q: How do I know if my child's problems are serious?**

**A:** *Everyday stressors can cause a change in your child's behavior. Problems deserve attention when they are severe, persistent and impact daily activities. Seek help if your child experiences a change in appetite, sleep pattern, becomes socially withdrawn and/or fearful.*

**Q: Whom should I consult to seek help for my child?**

**A:** *First, consult your child's doctor, and ask for a complete exam of your child. Ask whether your child needs further evaluation by a specialist in child behavioral problems. Specialist may include; psychiatrist, psychologists, social workers and behavioral specialist.*

**Q: Will my child get better in time?**

**A:** *Sometimes yes, but in other cases children will need continued professional help. Great care should be given to help a child who is suffering, because mental, behavioral or emotional disorders can affect the way the child grows up.*

**Q: What mental disorders are seen in children?**

**A:** *Mental disorders, with possible onset in childhood include: anxiety disorders, attention deficit & disruptive behavior disorders, autism, eating and mood disorders. Other disorders can include schizophrenia, tic disorders and under some circumstances bed wetting and soiling may be symptoms of a mental disorder.*

**Q: Can events such as death in the family, illness in a parent, onset of poverty or divorce cause symptoms in a child?**

**A:** *Yes, when a tragedy occurs or some extreme stress hits, every member of a family is affected, even the youngest ones. This should also be considered when evaluating mental, emotional or behavioral symptoms in a child.*

**Q: How are mental disorders diagnosed in children?**

**A:** *Similar to adults, disorders are diagnosed by observing signs and symptoms. A skilled professional will consider these signs and symptoms and an assessment will be made according to criteria established by specialist. Very young children often cannot express their thoughts and feelings, which makes diagnosis a challenging task.*

For more information children with mental disorders please visit:  
<https://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/booklets/ChildrensBook.htm>

