

Mental health and college students

December 4 2018, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—There's an adjustment period for almost every new college student—many young people have struggles balancing independence and a heavy workload. But there are some signs that

suggest your young person needs more serious help than a care package from home.

Some problems are temporary, like anxiety and stress, which affect huge numbers of [college](#) students. Some lifelong conditions, like bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, may first appear now.

It may be hard for parents to tell if their [college student](#) needs better coping skills, a stronger support network or treatment for a serious mental [health](#) issue. But reaching out at the first signs of trouble can enable your child to get help before he or she reaches a crisis point.

Untreated mental health issues can lead to substance abuse, other dangerous behaviors and even suicide—the second leading cause of death among college students after accidents.

Being unable to study, attend class or sleep and eat well are red flags for many problems, including anxiety disorders, depression and [substance abuse](#).

Some Signs of Drug and Alcohol Abuse:

- Not remembering actions and events.
- Relationship problems.
- Risky behaviors like driving drunk.
- Falling and other injuries.

Some Signs of Anxiety Disorders:

- Frequent feelings of fear or panic.
- Recurring nightmares and other sleep problems
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Obsessive thoughts.

Some Signs of Depression:

- Deep sadness, anxiety and irritability.
- Loss of interest in social activities and favorite pastimes.
- Sleeping difficulties.
- Loss of or increase in appetite.

If you notice troubling signs, talk to your child about accessing on-campus resources like a [student](#) counseling center or health service. If your child is reluctant to get college counseling but willing to seek help off-campus, you might start the search for a community mental health center, hospital outpatient clinic or private therapist experienced with the situation your child is facing.

Once your child agrees to talk to a counselor or doctor, the next step is for him or her to make the appointment and take an active role in treatment.

More information: The Jed Foundation has detailed information to help parents spot [transition year difficulties](#) early on.

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