

How Can You Tell When You or Your Child Needs Help?

To get a sense of whether you or your child might need professional attention, consider the following checklists, which list some of the problems faced by parents and children.



A Checklist for You

1. Do you find yourself depleted and overwhelmed around your children most of the time?
2. Do you and your partner disagree or fight primarily about the children?
3. Do you feel your children are not living up to your expectations or turning out the way you imagined?
4. Most of the time, do you feel that being a parent is a joyless or thankless task?
5. Do you find yourself losing your temper when you're around your children? Do you scream at them or hit them?
6. Do you look for every opportunity to spend time away from your kids?
7. Do you feel anxious when you're with your children and imagine all the bad things that could happen to them? Do you feel this way most of the time when you're not with them, too?
8. Are you and your partner struggling with your relationship and contemplating a separation? Have you just separated or divorced your partner?
9. Do you use alcohol or other drugs to feel better or deal with problems? Does your partner? Do your children know that you use substances in this way?
10. Are you, your partner, or someone close to you seriously ill, or are most of your emotional and physical energies centered around this serious illness?

A Checklist for Your Child

1. Does your child have a serious and consistent problem with eating or sleeping?
2. Has there been any substantial change for the worse in your child's behavior?
3. Has your child's mood seemed consistently sad or blue?
4. Has your child seemed anxious, nervous, fearful, or phobic for some time?
5. Is your child repeatedly waking up with nightmares or night terrors?
6. Has your child's school performance consistently deteriorated? Does he have trouble with school work?
7. Has your child had a number of bewildering and disturbing accidents over a short period of time?
8. Does your child say he has no friends and that no one likes him? Is your child very shy or a "loner"?
9. Has your child ever said he wished he was dead or discussed his own death in specific detail?
10. Has your child harmed or been cruel to animals or other children?

If you've answered yes to any of these questions, then a professional consultation may be useful to both you and your child.

