



School-Based Mental Health Office of School Health

Be Alert: Warning Signs that Warrant Your Attention

The following are behavioral, emotional, physical, and cognitive indicators that may be warning signs that a child may benefit from a clinical evaluation and/or additional services.

<p style="text-align: center;">Emotional Signs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Very unhappy, teary, depressed ● Sense of worthlessness, hopelessness, helplessness ● Is down on him/herself ● Excessive anger, irritability ● Very afraid, fearful, nervous ● Difficulty controlling emotions—e.g. explosive or impulsive ● Rapid shifts in emotions—e.g. extreme ‘ups and downs’ ● Does not show feelings/does not consider the feelings of others 	<p style="text-align: center;">Physical Signs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regularly complains of various aches and pains ● Frequent visits to the nurse’s office ● Vague physical complaints ● Tires easily ● Has little energy ● Trouble sleeping, and/or falls asleep in class often ● Loss of appetite or overeating ● Bowel/bladder problems ● Arrives to school fatigued ● Appears disheveled or unkempt
<p style="text-align: center;">Behavioral Signs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frequent outbursts, destroys things ● Distracted, forgets or loses things easily ● Fidgeting, unable to sit still ● Does not listen to others ● Acts younger than his/her age ● Deliberately hurts self*, is self-destructive ● Disregards personal safety and safety of others ● Hurts others /aggressive to others ● Cruel to others, threatens, bullies, teases others ● Has no friends, is withdrawn, detached (excessive shyness) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Cognitive Signs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Worries a lot ● Exhibits negative expectations and/or judgments ● Trouble concentrating, paying attention ● Appears disorientated ● Appears to be confused ● Preoccupied with an idea, often bizarre ● Seems to hear or see things, has delusional ideas* ● Seems to ‘space out’ or is often ‘lost in his/her own world’ ● Has difficulty following a conversation of discussion

*Indicators marked with an * warrant an immediate referral

All of the above mentioned indicators become warnings signs when they occur frequently, in a variety of situations and disrupt the child’s ability to learn and socialize with others. Look for these warnings signs in the child’s conversations with adults and/or peers, written assignments, art work and any behaviors observed in school environment.

When you identify a child who exhibits any of these warning signs:

1. Contact the school’s guidance guidance and/or a school based mental health professional
2. Provide information regarding the warnings signs the child is exhibit and any pertinent history

More information about school-based support for mental and behavioral Health, contact: **Scott Bloom, LCSW, Director of School Mental Health Services - SBloom5@schools.nyc.gov or 212-374-6846**