

Take an ACTIVE role to prevent youth violence and protect child health and safety.

A tip sheet for parents, relatives, teachers, coaches, and other concerned community adults to identify serious concerns for their children.

Can you identify the signs and symptoms of emotional problems in children and teens? How do you tell the difference between a normal childhood mood swing and the early signs of potential mental disorder? Each individual situation varies – but here are some helpful general guidelines.

Positive parental time and attention is the most important protection. Make time to have regular, meaningful conversations with your child. Ask about his or her daily life and feelings, and really LISTEN!

When Should YOU Take Action?

Some situations are very serious and should be acted upon immediately:

- Bringing weapons to school
- Threats or acts of violence (against pets, people)
- Obsession with, or interest in, weapons or violent acts
- Self-harm (cutting, burning, bruising)
- Talking or thinking of suicide
- Being hurt or victimized by others
- Illegal actions
- Running away from home
- Use of alcohol or drugs
- Delusions or hallucinations

Seek help if you notice changes in your child's behavior, or symptoms of distress that last more than two weeks:

- Lying or stealing
- Increased truancy
- Decrease in school grades
- Isolating from friends and family
- Irritability, anger
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Conflict with peers and friends
- Sleep problems or fatigue
- Low self esteem
- Frequent headaches, stomach problems
- Poor or excessive appetite
- Crying spells
- Excessive worrying and fears
- Hopelessness
- Poor concentration

Err on the side of caution. If something feels wrong, take action!

Who do I call for professional help?

- Call the Police or 911 for urgent or dangerous situations
- Talk to your school principal about immediate access to counseling services at school.
- Make an appointment with your child's doctor to screen for mental and physical health problems.
- For questions about youth behaviors, crisis screening and support, assessments and counseling, call:
 - Youth and Family Services (YFS) in the City of Fremont Human Services Department at (510) 574-2100. Citizens may call anonymously with concerns about a youth's behavior.
 - Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

For tips about parenting

City of Fremont Youth and Family Services Parent Project:

<http://www.fremont.gov/index.aspx?NID=1085>

Family Checkup – Positive Parenting prevents substance abuse:

<http://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/files/Famliychekupall.pdf>

American Psychological Association, Raising Children to Resist Violence:

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/resist-violence.aspx>

For more information about warning signs and youth violence

MTV and American Psychological Association: http://www.mtv.com/onair/flipped/warning_signs.pdf

Youth Risk Prevention Specialists: <http://sspwi.dpi.wi.gov/files/sspwi/pdf/bhssibolewarningsigns.pdf>

Break the Cycle – Empowering Youth to End Domestic Violence: <http://www.breakthecycle.org/>

For more information about child and youth mental health

Family Education and Resource Center: <http://www.askferc.org/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: <http://store.samhsa.gov/home>

National Institute on Drug Abuse: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/parents-teachers>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Stop Bullying: <http://www.stopbullying.gov/>

National Institute of Mental Health:

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/index.shtml>

National Alliance on Mental Illness, Child and Adolescent Action Center:

http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=For_Parents,_Caregivers,_and_Youth&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=37809