

Signs of Trauma

Children (Age 6 - 12)

Trauma can have significant impact on a child's life, but sometimes it can be hard to spot the signs.



Trauma may affect a child's...

In the following ways...



Body

- Frequent headaches
- Stomachaches
- Overreaction to minor bumps and bruises
- Eating much more or less than peers
- Other unexplained physical symptoms



Brain (thinking)

- Attention and/or memory problems
- Sudden changes in performance
- Low or failing grades
- Inability to trust others



Emotions (feelings)

- Unusually high level of anger
- Very withdrawn or wanting to be left alone
- Loneliness
- Preoccupied with fear something bad will happen



Behaviors

- Difficulty in transitioning from one activity to the next
- Fighting with adults or peers
- Increase in activity level
- Statements and questions about death and dying
- Drug or alcohol use
- Lack of enjoyment in activities
- Sexual knowledge beyond the child's age
- Self-inflicted injury (e.g., picking scabs, pulling hair, hitting head into wall, or cutting)
- Behaviors common in younger child (e.g., thumb-sucking, bed wetting, fear of the dark)



Relationships & attachments

- Lack of appropriate boundaries
- Difficulty making friends
- Fails to seek help from adults when hurt or scared
- Fear of separation from parents
- Difficulty with authority
- Frequent behavioral referrals at school

Note: While this guide is meant to help you think about potential signs of trauma, it is not meant to be a diagnostic tool or checklist. Remember, these lists are not exhaustive. Individual children may exhibit a combination of signs from different age groups and signs of trauma may vary based on the developmental stage and cultural background of the child.