UK Adolescent Behavioral Health

Adolescence can be a challenging time in a child’s life. While not all adolescent behavior issues require intervention, it can be difficult to know what type of help is best for the adolescent in your life.

The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that one in 10 children suffer from mental illness, including behavioral issues such as depression, eating disorders or drug use. UK HealthCare’s Adolescent Behavioral Health unit is an inpatient unit that provides adolescents with the care needed to treat their mental illness.

If you are concerned about the behavior of an adolescent in your life, review the information below to determine if they need to see a mental health professional. Call 800-776-COPE (2673) for a pre-admission assessment today.

What is UK Adolescent Behavioral Health?
The inpatient Adolescent Behavioral Health unit offers a personal, structured environment for adolescents with mental illness or behavioral health concerns. The unit’s team of physicians, social workers, a psychologist and nurses work together to identify the cause of behavioral problems and provide treatment.

Who is admitted to Adolescent Behavioral Health?
We admit and treat adolescents between the ages of 11 and 17 who are experiencing mental illnesses and behavioral issues, such as:

- Eating disorders.
- Depression.
- Opiate-dependent teen mothers.
- Self-harm/suicidal thoughts.
- Gender identity.
- Bipolar disorder.
- Bullying victims.
- Marijuana use.

What are signs and symptoms of mental illness?
There are a variety of symptoms that are associated with mental illness. Some of the most common symptoms in adolescents are:

- Decrease in school performance.
- Isolation, including locking themselves in their rooms.
- Constantly feeling misunderstood.
- Excess irritability over minor issues.
- Always feeling sick.
- Purging food, little to no eating or an intense fear of becoming obese.
- Frequent, unexplainable outbursts of anger or aggression.
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs.
- Threats to harm others and/or themselves.
- Significant changes in eating and/or sleeping habits.
- Frequently getting in trouble at school.
- Threats to run away.
- Severe anxiety and worrying.
- Defying authority figures.

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What kind of treatment does the unit provide?

There are a variety of symptoms that are associated with mental illness. Some of the most common symptoms in adolescents are:

• Each adolescent in our unit has daily meetings with multiple physicians aimed at identifying and treating the core issues using therapy and medication. In addition, patients attend group therapy sessions where they talk about personal issues and listen to peers. The group sessions are a safe environment where adolescents can form bonds and be empathetic toward one another. This effectively builds self-worth, confidence and resiliency.

• Recreational therapy is a scheduled time for our patients to participate in normal activities. During this time, they can socialize with one another, play video games, listen to music or use the artistic supplies to paint, color or draw. Other special therapies are offered during the week including pet therapy, where teens pet and play with dogs. We also offer music therapy, which gives patients an opportunity to use musical instruments to express themselves, set and accomplish individual goals, and improve their overall health. In the evenings, adolescents have the opportunity to meet and talk to the staff chaplain.

• When adolescents are not meeting with their physician or attending group sessions, we encourage them to journal, writing down their feelings and setting personal goals for the next day. This allows them to think introspectively and make a commitment to themselves to get better.

Our treatment team

Kelly Hill, MD – Lead Physician, Director of Adolescent Behavioral Health
Catherine Martin, MD – Physician
Karen Gaible-Carrol – Unit Manager

What should I do in the event of an emergency?

Medical care for adolescents with mental health emergencies is widely available. If an adolescent is considering or threatening to hurt themselves or others:

• Call 911 for emergency services.
• Go to UK Good Samaritan Emergency Room for your child to be admitted.

Resources:

UK Adolescent Behavioral Health
UK Good Samaritan Hospital
310 S. Limestone
Lexington KY 40508
800-776-2673 (toll free) or 859-226-7060
www.ukhealthcare.uky.edu/behavioral-health

Additional resources:

National Institute of Mental Health
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 7C-02
Rockville MD 20857
301-443-4513
www.nimh.nih.gov

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
3615 Wisconsin Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20016-3007
www.aacap.org