



# WHAT ARE THE EARLY SYMPTOMS?

Early identification of symptoms significantly increases the chance for young people to stay in school, work and maintain relationships.

Some feelings or behaviors listed here might indicate a brief reaction to stressful events. On the other hand, these changes could be early symptoms of a developing mental illness. It is important to get an assessment especially if:

- symptoms last longer than a few weeks
- there are sudden changes in the person’s behavior
- changes seem very out of character or bizarre
- or there is a major drop in school or work performance or memory.

Early symptoms or new experiences can occur on and off over time.

**It is the combination of several symptoms rather than any one symptom that puts a person at risk.**

### Feeling “something’s not quite right”

- Feeling like your brain is just not working right
- Not able to do school work or one’s usual job
- Uncharacteristic behavior
- Heightened sensitivity to sights, sounds, smells or touch

### Hearing sounds/voices that are not there

- Feeling like your brain is playing tricks on you
- Any continuing sights or sounds that others can’t see or hear
- Feeling like someone is putting thoughts in your brain

### Jumbled thoughts and confusion

- Trouble with focus and attention
- Losing abilities in athletics or hobbies
- Difficulty reading or understanding long sentences
- Forgetting and getting lost
- Not understanding what people are saying

### Declining interest in people, activities and self-care

- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Loss of motivation or energy
- Dramatic changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Lack of interest in things you used to enjoy
- Just not caring about your appearance

### Being fearful for no good reason

- Worrying that others are thinking bad thoughts about you
- Thinking others wish to harm you in some way
- Watching others with suspicion
- Fearful, uneasy feeling around people

### Trouble speaking clearly

- Trouble with focus and attention
- Losing track of conversations
- Forgetting

## THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS NEED IMMEDIATE ATTENTION:

- Suicidal thoughts
- Dramatic change in sleep or appetite
- Hearing voices that no one else hears
- Seeing things that no one else sees
- Believing without reason that others are plotting against you
- Extreme fright in situations that do not warrant it
- Extreme unreasonable resentments or grudges
- Garbled speech or writing



**Don’t ignore the early symptoms. The Kickstart Program is here to help.**

**www.kickstartsd.org  
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