



Understanding Childhood Behaviors and Disorders


United Mental Health Promoters



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF
MENTAL HEALTH
hope. recovery. wellbeing.

▶▶ Agenda

- Understanding Child Development
 - Ages 6 to 12
 - Ages 12 to 18
- Adolescent Behavior
- Parenting Techniques
- Childhood Disorders
 - Oppositional Defiant Disorder
 - Intermittent Explosive Disorder
 - Conduct Disorder
- Parent Self Care
- Treatment

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**Why is it Important to
understand Child
Development?**

►► Understanding Child Development

- Children develop at their own pace, so it's impossible to tell exactly when a child will learn a given skill. However, the developmental milestones give a general idea of the changes to expect as a child gets older.
- It also helps parents/caregivers understand how they can support the child to develop social relationships in shaping personality and growth at each point of development.



Ages 6 to 12

- Developmental Goal: To develop competence
- Question: “Can I make it in the world of people and things?”

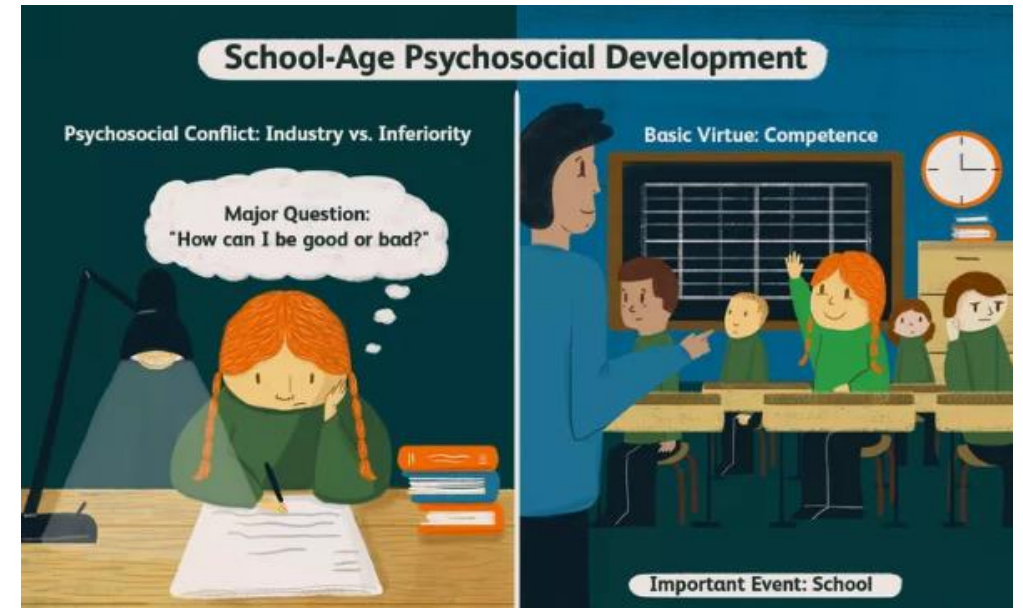
▶▶ Ages 6 to 12 – Competence vs. Inferiority

- **Competence:** If children are encouraged and reinforced for their initiative, they begin to feel competent and feel confident in their ability to achieve goals.
- **Inferiority:** If their initiative is not encouraged, if it is restricted by caregivers or teachers, then the child begins to feel inferior, doubting his own abilities and therefore may not reach his or her potential. When children are constantly criticized for their effort, they may develop feelings of inferiority.

▶▶ Ages 6 to 12 – How can we encourage competence?

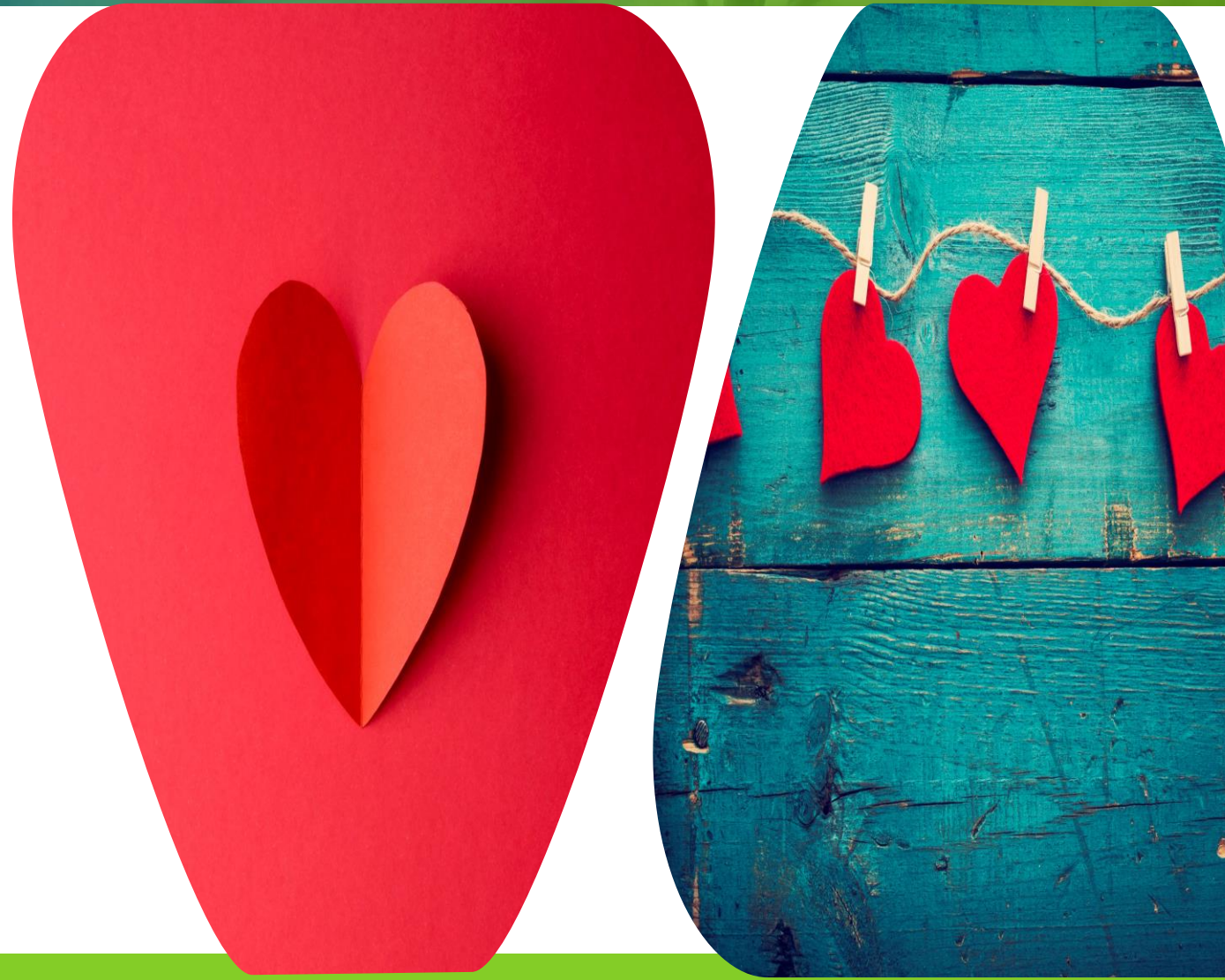
Supporting and encouraging children in areas in which they excel can help foster feelings of competence and achievement

What are some examples?



▶▶ Ages 6 to 12 - Encouraging Competence

- Unconditional love and support from adults can help all children through this stage, particularly those who may struggle with feelings of inferiority
- Do not equate achievement with acceptance and love



Age 12 to 18



- Developmental Goal: To develop own identity
- Question: “Who am I? What can I be?”

▶▶ Age 12 to 18 – Identity vs. Role Confusion

- **Identity:** To succeed in this stage, adolescents need to establish a clear sense of self. They will need to determine their priorities in life (family, academic success, etc.). Then they will need to set goals for their adult selves based on those values.
- **Role confusion:** Some adolescents may have a weak sense of self. They may struggle to break away from what others expect them to be. Without a consistent identity, they may grow confused about what they truly want for the future.

▶▶ Adolescent Challenges

- Physical changes in their bodies as they go through puberty
- Transition from middle school to high school
- Influenced by peers
- Expected to make more decisions on their own

What are other adolescent challenges?

Typical vs. Not Typical Adolescent Behavior

- **Increased moodiness – Typical Behavior**
 - *Not Typical: Intense, long-lasting moods; risky mood-dependent behaviors, severe depression, self-injury or suicidal thinking*
- **Increased self consciousness, increased focus on body image - Typical Behavior**
 - *Not Typical: Perfectionism, purging or restricting eating, obsessive about or neglectful of hygiene*
- **Sleep cycle shifts later – Typical Behavior**
 - *Not Typical: Often up nearly all night; sleeps almost all day on weekends; late to school*
- **Messy room - Typical Behavior**
 - *Not Typical: Old, rotting food; teen not able to find basic necessities; dirty clothes covering floor chronically*

Typical vs. Not Typical Adolescent Behavior (con't)

- **Increased desire for privacy – Typical Behavior**
 - *Not Typical: Isolation from family, lack of communication*
- **Strong interest in technology, social media – Typical Behavior**
 - *Not Typical: Many hours per day spent on internet; high-risk or triggering websites; meeting strangers online; revealing too much (e.g. “sexting”, overly personal posts on social media)*
- **Increased parent-adolescent conflict – Typical Behavior**
 - *Not Typical: Verbal or physical aggression, running away*
- **Preoccupation with sex – Typical Behavior**
 - *Not Typical: Sexual promiscuity, multiple partners*

▶▶ Parenting an Adolescent Dilemma

No Rules



Strict Rules

Have clear rules and enforce them consistently

AND AT THE SAME TIME

Be willing to negotiate on some issues and don't overuse consequences

What are some examples?

▶▶ Parenting an Adolescent Dilemma

*Making light of
problem behaviors*



*Making too much of
typical adolescent
behavior*

Recognize when a behavior “crosses the line” and get help for that behavior

AND AT THE SAME TIME

Recognize which behaviors are part of typical adolescent development

What are some examples?

▶▶ Parenting an Adolescent Dilemma

*Forcing
independence*



Fostering dependence

Give your adolescent guidance, support, and coaching to help figure out how to be responsible

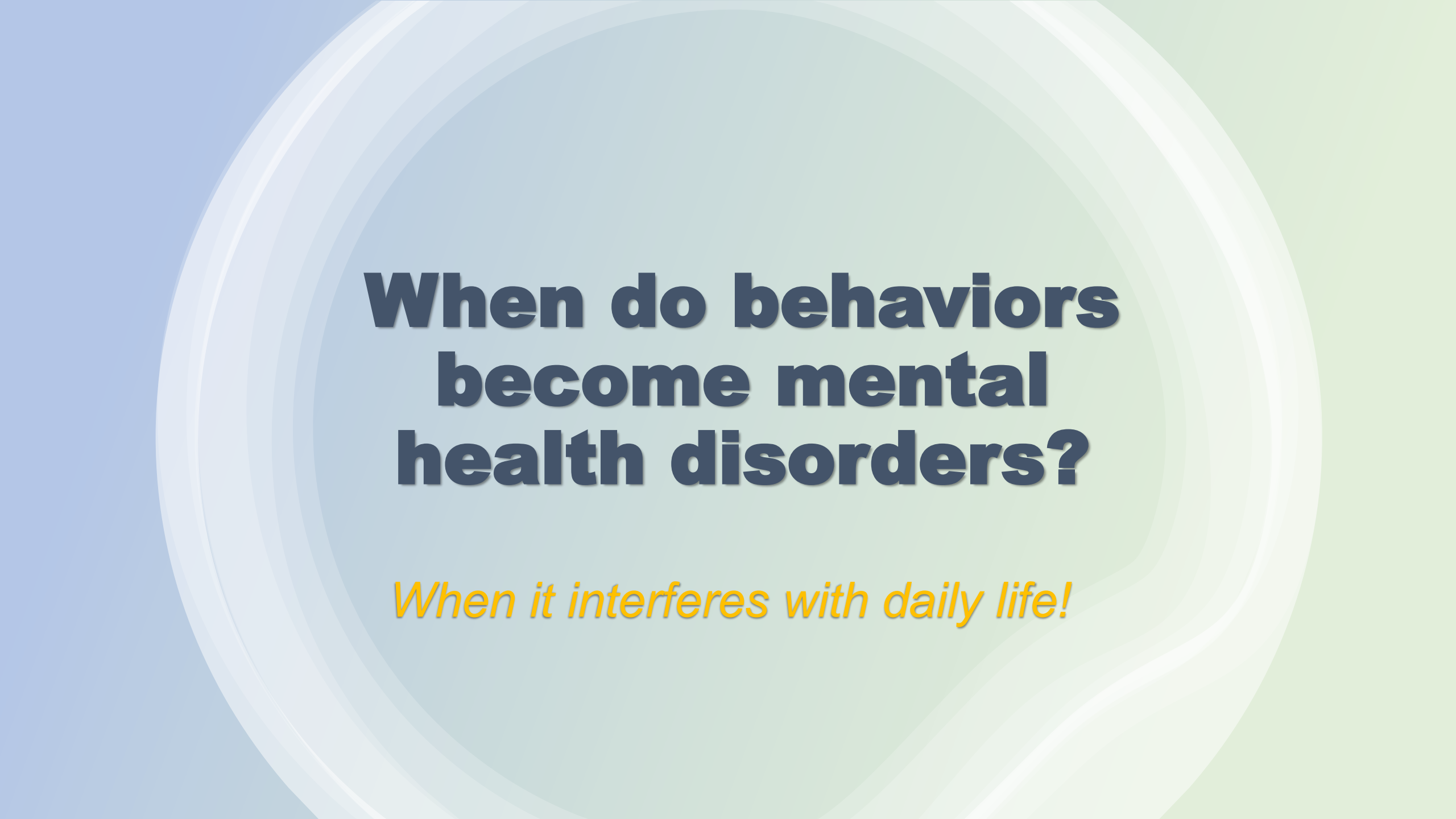
AND AT THE SAME TIME

SLOWLY give your adolescent greater amounts of freedom and independence while continuing to encourage an appropriate amount of reliance on others

What are some examples?

Parenting Techniques

- Spend quality time with children
- Talk to your children
- Show affection
- Encourage positive behavior
- Set a good example
- Set clear rules
- Use age-appropriate consequences



When do behaviors become mental health disorders?

When it interferes with daily life!

Childhood Disorders

Oppositional
Defiant Disorder

Intermittent
Explosive Disorder

Conduct Disorder

▶▶ **Oppositional Defiant Disorder**

- Frequently loses his/her temper
- Argues excessively with adults
- Intentionally disturbs and annoys others
- Challenges and refuses to comply with rules or with what adults ask
- Blames others for his/her errors
- Frequently irritable and resentful

▶▶ Intermittent Explosive Disorder

- Angry outbursts
- Verbal aggression
- Physical aggression
- Destruction of property

▶▶ **Conduct Disorder**

- Bullies, initiates physical fights
- Used weapons to cause physical harm
- Physically cruelled to people/animals
- Steals while confronting the victim
- Runs away from home
- Forced someone into sexual activity
- Deliberately sets fires
- Destroys property
- Lies to obtain goods

Treatment is not short. It takes time to establish new attitudes and patterns of behavior. Nevertheless, treatment offers an opportunity to improve the present and have hope for success in the future.



What do you do when you are feeling overwhelmed?

What works?

What doesn't work?



▶▶ Parent Self-Care

For parents, it is important to stay grounded

- When feeling overwhelmed, step away from the situation
- Deep breathing
- Share your concerns without judgement
- Be prepared to adjust expectations
- Talk to a friend for support
- Find your community – church, support group, PTA group
- Find therapy
- Exercise
- Eat well
- Maintain hobbies to avoid parenting becoming all-consuming

▶▶ Treatment

Treatment may include:

- Evaluation by mental health professional
- Parenting classes to help parents/caretakers learn to handle/manage the behaviors
- Individual psychotherapy where the child can develop more effective control over his/her anger.
- Family therapy to improve communication
- Behavior therapy to develop solutions to the problems and lessen negativity

▶▶ Resources

- Surgeon General Recommendations on Mental Health. Retrieve from <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-youth-mental-health-advisory.pdf>
- “How Are You Feeling These Days?” Retrieved from [How Right Now | Finding What Helps \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Questions?



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For mental health resources, services, and support, please call our 24/7 Help Line at (800) 854-7771 or visit <https://dmh.lacounty.gov/get-help-now>

You may also connect with us at @LACDMH on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube

Need to be connected to mental health services?

Call 800-854-7771
(ext. 1) for mental health referrals and crisis services.



Your emotional wellbeing is our top priority.

Call 800-854-7771



Need resources for veterans and their families?

Call 800-854-7771
(ext. 3)



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Stigma and Discrimination Reduction (SDR) Survey



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UCLA

SDR Program Questionnaire (English)

Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Program Participant Questionnaire



<https://tinyurl.com/SDR-Eng>

To help us improve, please tell us what you think!

- SDR is anonymous and voluntary
- Please click on the link in the chat box and fill in:

Program:

Understanding Childhood Behaviors and Disorders

Presenters:

My name is ...

Date:

Today is ...