

General Mental Wellness • 18 to 26 Years

The transition to adulthood is an exciting and challenging time for children and their parents. This important transitional stage of life presents challenges as they are now considered adults and have increased expectations on being able to function with less support from their families.

Typical developmental milestones for ages 18 to 26 years:

- Act impulsively or not fully understand potential long-term consequences as they are continuing to develop and mature
- Cognitively, they're gaining a greater understanding of the world and their place in it by questioning what is right and wrong and further developing their own set of morals and values
- Socially, relationships mature and may be more intimate, they feel independent as well as enjoy being part of a group
 Sexually, they're exploring more as well as continuing to explore their sexual orientation
- Emotionally, they're empathizing and connecting more with others, however, they may show signs of impulsivity and have unpredictable emotional responses
- Career is important to them, they are focused on their future and setting goals to achieve success

Mental illness is more prevalent during this period than physical illness and many mental disorders become apparent for the first time: severe mood, bipolar, substance use, psychotic and personality disorders. The most common mental health issues that affect this age group are depressive and anxiety disorders.

Suicidal ideation may also be present. Unfortunately, only about 25% of young adults with mental health needs will reach out for professional support.

If you notice any behavior that concerns you, talk to your child directly and encourage them to discuss it with their pediatrician.



Great ways to connect with and support your young adult:

- Start the conversation by asking open-ended questions to engage with them. Ask about school, work, relationships, friends and any issues they're having
 - their mood, substance use, sexuality, body image, stress, appetite, anxiety, sleep and suicidal ideation
 - It's helpful to have these conversations over time and let them know you're there for them
 - Avoid "W" questions: who what, when, where, how, and why, as it often makes people defensive and less likely to share

Getting help early is better. Never worry alone. Consult your pediatrician.

Frequency Intensity Duration

If you notice changes in the frequency, intensity and duration of your child's behavior or mood, it's important to let your pediatrician know. List questions and concerns to share with your pediatrician:

How often is it happening? How intense is it? How long does it last?

Are these behaviors impacting your child in school, at home and with friends? Include your child's medications and family mental health history.



Questions/Concerns

If your child is experiencing a mental health crisis or suicidal thoughts, call or text **988**, Connecticut's Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

988 offers 24/7/365 access to trained staff who can help in mental health and substance use crises, provide referrals to resources and perform warm transfers to Mobile Crisis Intervention Services or emergency services including Urgent Crisis Centers in your community.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS

If your child is experiencing a life-threatening situation

Dial 911 immediately

ACCESS Mental Health for Youth



Attention Health Care Provider:

If you have questions or need clinical guidance, ACCESS Mental Health is FREE and available to you.

Call us: Monday-Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Hartford Hospital 855.561.7135

Wheeler Clinic, Inc. 855.631.9835

Yale Child Study Center 844.751.8955