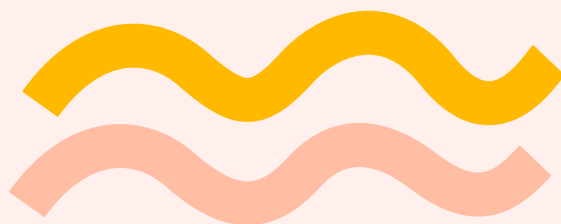




# SIGNS YOUR CHILD MIGHT NOT BE COPING

AND HOW YOU CAN  
SUPPORT THEM

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## EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL CHANGES

- Changes in their “normal” way of interacting with the world
- Sudden shifts in mood (low or high), withdrawal, irritability/aggression.
- Unexpected outbursts of anger, sadness, or frustration.
- Persistent worry about everyday situations or events.
- Signs of low self-esteem or negative self-talk.
- Avoidance of activities they once enjoyed or social situations.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- **Encourage expression:** Encourage your child to express their feelings openly and without judgment. Let them know it's okay to feel a range of emotions and you are there to support them.
- **Create a safe space:** Create a safe and supportive environment at home where your child feels comfortable talking about their emotions and experiences.
- **Model healthy coping:** Model healthy coping strategies yourself, such as talking about your own emotions and how you manage them in healthy ways.
- **Seek professional help:** If you notice persistent emotional or behavioural changes, consider seeking professional help from a psychologist or counsellor who has a special interest in working with children

## PHYSICAL SIGNS

- Irregular sleep patterns (e.g. change in bedtime, excessive/less sleep) or frequent nightmares.
- Changes in eating habits, like overeating or undereating.
- Unexplained headaches, muscle aches, stomach aches, or other physical complaints.
- 'Nervous' habits (e.g. skin picking, nail-biting, increased fidgeting)
- Signs of regression, such as bedwetting or thumb-sucking in older children.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- **Promote healthy habits:** Encourage your child to maintain healthy habits like regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and adequate sleep to support their physical well-being. These are great family activities/values to focus on all together
- **Provide comfort:** Offer comfort and reassurance if your child is experiencing physical discomfort, and let them know you're there to support them through any challenges they may face.
- **Medical evaluation:** If your child complains of physical symptoms, consider taking them to a healthcare professional for a thorough evaluation to rule out any underlying medical conditions

## SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC INDICATORS

- A change to spending excessive time alone rather than with family or friends.
- Diminished interest in hobbies, extracurricular activities, or sports.
- Loss of interest in socialising or have trouble making friends.
- Increased difficulty with starting/completing work (e.g. homework, assignments)
- Monitor grades and feedback from teachers for any decline or unusual behaviour.
- Take seriously any complaints of bullying or mistreatment from peers.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- **Facilitate social connections:** Help your child build and maintain positive social connections by arranging playdates, encouraging participation in group activities, or joining clubs or teams.
- **Support social skills:** Support your child to navigate social situations, especially ones they might be finding difficult (e.g. initiating friendships, managing conflict).
- **Stay involved:** Stay involved in your child's academic life by chatting about their school work, offering support to scaffold their work and advocating for their needs if necessary.
- **Address bullying:** Take any complaints of bullying seriously and work with school authorities to address the issue and ensure your child feels safe and supported at school.

## RISK BEHAVIORS

- Be vigilant for signs of self-harming behaviours like cutting or burning. This can often be done in areas that aren't visible (e.g. hips, stomach, thighs) as well as arms
- Be aware of evidence of substance use, such as vaping, alcohol or drug paraphernalia.
- Notice if your child neglects personal hygiene or grooming habits.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- **Create a supportive environment:** Create a supportive and non-judgmental environment where your child feels comfortable discussing sensitive topics like self-harm or substance abuse.
- **Self-harm concerns.** If you are worried that your child might be harming themselves or feeling suicidal, it is ok to talk about this in a calm, non-judgemental and supportive way.
- **Set clear boundaries:** Set clear and consistent boundaries regarding behaviour, and communicate the consequences of risky behaviours effectively.
- **Encourage healthy outlets:** Encourage your child to engage in healthy outlets for stress relief and emotional expression, such as creative activities, sports, or hobbies.
- **Seek professional guidance:** If you suspect your child is engaging in risky behaviours, seek guidance from a healthcare professional or psychologist who can provide appropriate support and intervention.

# **Parenting can be really tough. You don't have to do it alone.**

Reach out for support to those who care  
about you and your child

And if you need professional support, get in  
touch with us

[www.connectedcc.com.au](http://www.connectedcc.com.au)

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