



How Can I Help My Child?

Addressing the emotional
needs of children, adolescents
and their families

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Children, adolescents, and infants have many ways to communicate emotional distress.

Sometimes children and adolescents...

- Feel very unhappy, worried, or frightened for reasons they cannot fully explain
- Have negative attitudes toward themselves and cannot feel good about who they are, even though others can observe their obvious talents and abilities
- Can't learn in school because they are preoccupied with thoughts or feelings
- Are restless or cannot concentrate because they have not acquired better ways to maintain confidence and calmness
- Do not know how to make friends or get along with others at school or in the family; sometimes they withdraw from social relationships
- Act aggressively because they cannot control their actions and cannot find other ways to express their feelings
- Have been exposed to overwhelming, stressful situations that tax their ability to cope

Who is a Child and Adolescent Analyst?

Child and adolescent analysts are mental health professionals with an advanced degree in a mental health field and extensive additional training in understanding child development and how a child and adolescent's mind works.

By virtue of their training, child analysts are particularly sensitive to the multiple (including biological, genetic, neurological, familial, and social) factors that influence a child's personality development. Child analysts are mindful of the importance of developing an integrated understanding of the complex interaction of all these factors in determining each child's unique developmental trajectory. This understanding can then be used in developing an individualized treatment plan specifically tailored to each child's particular needs.

Child and adolescent psychoanalysts are also trained to be particularly attuned to the importance of the parent-child relationship to the developing child. As a result, they view active collaboration with parents as a crucial aspect of the treatment.

For help finding a child and adolescent psychoanalyst, visit [Find an Analyst at \[apsa.org\]\(http://FindanAnalystatapsa.org\)](http://FindanAnalystatapsa.org).



What is Child and Adolescent Psychoanalysis?

Child and adolescent psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic (or psychodynamic) psychotherapy are specialized approaches to working with children, adolescents, and their families.

An evolving empirical literature supporting the efficacy of psychoanalytic approaches to the treatment of children and adolescents has made important contributions to our understanding of how children and adolescents can be helped by this approach.

Psychoanalytic treatment helps the child or adolescent understand and manage feelings more effectively; recognize and change poor coping strategies; and re-examine negative feelings about himself and others. The goal of treatment is not simply to overcome immediate troubles but to help each child or adolescent reach his or her full potential in all areas of life and to build a deep, long-lasting strength and resilience.

Much of this work is accomplished by building a strong, trusting relationship with the analyst who becomes a partner with the child and the family in understanding the child's struggles and capabilities.

Child and adolescent analysis relies heavily on work with the parents during every phase of the treatment. In addition to helping the child return to the path of normal, healthy development, child psychoanalysis aims to strengthen and restore the relationship between the child and parents to a more loving and mutually gratifying one.

Consultation with a child and adolescent analyst can help determine whether or not this form of treatment would be best suited to a child's unique needs.

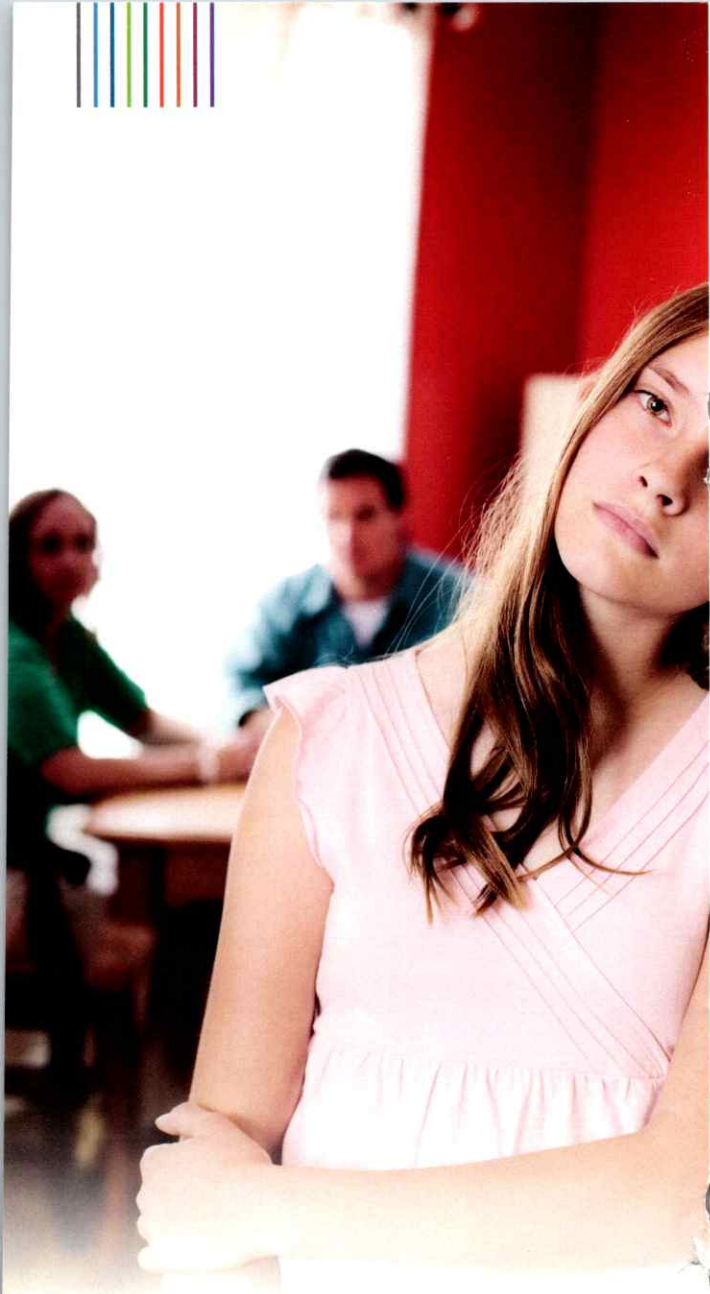
Sometimes adolescents...

- Feel confused about their identity and uncertain about their future
- Cannot channel their energy and creativity in ways that develop their potential
- Turn to drugs or alcohol to feel better because they are depressed
- Develop eating disorders as a way to manage difficult feelings they cannot verbalize
- Join gangs to find companions, community and a sense of safety.

Sometimes infants and toddlers...

- Cry a lot and cannot establish regular patterns of eating or sleeping
- Don't seem to be developing as quickly as their peers
- Bite, hit, or hurt other children
- Don't listen and cannot seem to "learn the rules"
- Have difficulties with toilet training





A child's difficulties are also deeply troubling to his or her parents.

Parents may feel...

- Anxious about the life changes that come with having children
- Frightened and unsure about where to turn for help
- Angry, resentful, helpless, and alone with their fears
- Ashamed, inadequate and guilty, blaming themselves for their child's difficulties
- Hopeless that things can ever get any better

How Consultation with a Trained Professional Can Help

Many specialized approaches to helping children and families are available. These approaches include cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), medication, psychoeducational evaluation and remediation, parent management training, and other forms of psychotherapy. While each of these approaches to treatment is useful in some cases, the existence of so many different approaches can make choosing the best path for you and your child a confusing and overwhelming experience.

Child and adolescent psychoanalysts are uniquely qualified to understand the "whole" child and help parents think about what form of help would be best suited to the individual needs of a particular child. Child and adolescent analysts are also well-positioned in the mental health community and able to assist parents in connecting with the professionals most highly qualified to provide the chosen treatment.