

**ASK THE EXPERT QUERIES**

**Category: Mental Health General**

**Query 1**

Jan 2015	Female	Age 06 to 08	My daughter is 8 years old. She used to weep all the time. She did not show interest in anything except playing computer games. If I ask about her school, friends, homework or anything she just start weeping. I do not know how to sort out this problem.
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**Query by: Parent**

**Response**

I suggest that you speak to her teachers to find out if how she is doing in school both academically and behaviorally. This will help determine if the issue only arises when she is at home or that she is also exhibiting this behavior in school. How is she when it comes to other things at home, for example following house rules, doing her chores and her mood in general? Encourage her talk to you about what seems to be bothering her. Curtail her time spent playing computer games and direct her attention towards other activities.

**Query 2**

Jan 2015	Female	Age 09 to 13	My daughter is 13 year old and sure she reached teenage but i think that her mind is still at low level. She teaches the students in her home that are invisible so sometimes I thought that she is not good mentally
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**Query by: Parent**

**Response**

Thank you for sharing your concerns. Many children at younger ages i.e. around the age of three years have imaginary friends and engage in play with these imaginary friends. This, however does not continue in the age that your daughter is currently in. It would be difficult to draw any exact conclusions about your daughter based on the information that you have shared and/or without having a thorough assessment. We suggest that you consult a medical doctor who can assess her normal developmental milestones and then guide and refer you accordingly, to the required professional. Before going to the doctor, it is suggested that you also meet with her teachers to get an idea about their observations.

**Query 3**

Feb 2015	Male	Age 09 to 13	My son is very intelligent and position holder. we have very good atmosphere in home. Nowadayz He makes faces when he concentrate anything like study ,writting,watching TV or playing games squeeze nose very frequently within minute and do some strange thing with his face before this he do continuously scratch his nail of thumb with other finger very consistently so it became horrible now .
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**Query by: Parent**

**Response**

Some of the ways to help your son deal with this repetitive behavior and what you term as a strange thing are as follows:

- The more a child concentrates and focuses on the behavior, the worse it gets. Thus let your child thinks of ways to distract himself and not pay too much attention to it.
- Stress can trigger and worsen this behavior. Thus help your child deal with his stress. If

he puts too many expectations on himself, wants things to be perfect, help him remove the pressure he puts on himself. If he delays and leaves his work for the end, help him plan his day so that he is not overwhelmed by too many deadlines.

- Tell him to let the behavior out if there is an urge and not hold them back as it can be counterproductive and worsen it.
- Make sure that your child gets enough sleep and rest at night as tiredness also makes the repetitive behavior worse.

There is a possibility that the repetitive movement and behavior that your son shows may be a 'tic'. Tics are sudden and repetitive in nature which children can find difficult to control. Some common tics include, nose wrinkling, head twitching, eye blinking, lip biting, facial grimacing, kicking, jumping, coughing, throat clearing, grunting, sniffing and hissing etc. While in some children tics go away with time, however in some they may stay for a longer duration. In case you feel that the behavior is not improving despite trying the tips mentioned, or getting worse with time, do consult a medical specialist, a child psychiatrist or psychologist for detailed evaluation and further guidance.

**Query 4**

Feb 2015	Male	Age 14 to 18	He is 8th class he has psychological problems that are becoming severe. He has no interest in education. He spends most of his time on internet. He is very rude and takes no notice of his elders. his performance in his studies show decline and shows no improvement. We need your guidance.
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**Query by: Parent**

**Response**

During the adolescent age (roughly starting around ten years and above), many children go through a series of normal emotional, physical and social changes. As a result of these changes there is more interest in peers and opposite sex, less interest in spending time with family and adults, frequent arguments and need to exert their own individuality and identity etc. Some of the things that you mention seem to suggest that your son may be also experiencing similar changes. The adolescent period can be overwhelming for adolescents, especially if they lack correct information about the changes that they are experiencing or/and if they feel that there is no one that they can communicate with. It might help if you talk to your son in an open and friendly manner about the change that you have noticed in his behavior and what your concerns are. Make sure to do it in a manner that allows him the space to talk rather than it being a lecture. Validate and normalize his feelings and let him know that he can talk to you if there is something bothering him or if he has any questions related to growing up. By communicating openly, you will be giving him an opportunity to discuss and share with you in case he is bothered about something and going through a difficult time.

Besides, this, you can also work with him to come up with some key rules and norms that he agrees to follow related to the time he will spend studying, on the internet, with friends etc. as well as acceptable behavior. Let him identify consequences, in case the norms are not followed so that he owns and follows the norms. The consequences must be reasonable and given respectfully. Help him develop communication skills so that he can state his feelings and thoughts clearly without offending others. You and your spouse can be the best role models in this regard by communicating with him assertively and clearly yourself.

Best of luck!

**Query 5**

Sept 2015	Female	Age 09 to 13	AOA. Sir my daughter is studying in cl 6th Silver. She was a shining student in her early classes. But her performance has deteriorated with the passage of time. She has studied at APS Mardan, APS Chinar Campus Murree before joining APS Westridge-III in 2012. I am very disturbed due to her poor performance in her academics. Please advise me what to do tackle this situation.
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**Query by: Parent**

**Response:**

There could be many possible reasons for the change in her academic performance ranging from difficulties due to frequent change of schools and teaching styles, problems with the peers at school, bullying, inability to understand a subject to stressors due to problems at home and/or adolescent changes that your daughter is going through.

Talk to her in an open, calm and friendly manner and share your observations about the changes you have noticed in her. Let her know that she can share anything that bothers her and that you will listen and support her without putting any blame. Once she starts to open up, help her deal with the situation accordingly, by both validating feelings that are normal and by helping her develop positive coping skills. Once the underlying issue bothering her is discussed and resolved, she will most likely be able to get back to concentrating on her studies.

**Query 5**

Sept 2015	Male	Age 06 to 08	my child is admitted in class one in the above school, and after two months his behaviour has completely changed, he started fighting with others and afraid to face teachers and parents, he behaves while studying as some one is going to beat him. his concentration and confidence has shaken, where as he obtained 86% marks in two check points. moreover he stoped sharing class activities especially any untoward incident with him.
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**Query by: Parent**

**Response**

The change in your child’s behavior appears to be brought about by some external stressors and pressures. He seems to be upset and scared of something and one would need to explore the cause so that it can be immediately addressed.

Some of the changes that children react to include changes in the family situation, adjustment in a new class, conflicts in the family, exposure to any form of violence within the family or outside, death or illness of a loved one, an accident, experience of bullying, sexual, emotional and physical abuse, etc. if you are aware of a recent change and think that the child maybe reacting to it, then talking to him about that change, allowing him to express his feelings and helping him develop better coping skills will help his behavior to settle down. Try to understand his fears and concerns related to the change and address them accordingly.

If you are not aware of any obvious change, then finding out the reason would be essential before these can be addressed. Talk to your child when he is alone with you, in a calm and non-threatening manner about the changes you have observed in him. Allow him the space to respond. Some of the statements that might help you start the conversation are:

“I have noticed that you appear afraid and sad and are not your usual self. Children can feel this way when something bothers them. This does not mean that children are bad or weak. I want you to know that no matter how big or small that issue is, you can talk to me about it.

Talking about situations that make us feel sad, upset or angry or just talking about our feelings help us become strong. When we talk to a parent, a trusted adult, they can help us deal with it in a healthy manner.”

Make sure that you are not harsh, critical or too anxious when you speak to him as he may shy away for talking openly. He might take a bit of time to open up and in the mean time keep observing his behavior and spend time with him on daily basis.

Once you are clearer about the issues bothering him, you can work towards both addressing that stressful situation and helping him cope with it. If needed, write to us for further support or consult a mental health professional for guidance.

**Query 6**

Sept 2015	Male	Age 09 to 13	Sir, my son is 10 years 8 months old, studied in class seven. sir, from the last six months he is feeling fear while sleeping in separate bed. from the age of 4 he is sleeping with his grand mother but now he is afraid to sleep with his grand mother and also on separate bed in parents room.
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**Query by: Parent**  
**Response**

Finding out the reason for feeling afraid would be the first step towards helping your child out. It would be important to explore if he is only afraid of sleeping in a separate bed or if he has developed other fears too e.g. about going alone somewhere, being around certain people, etc.? It would also be essential to know if there any changes in his sleep and appetite pattern, energy levels, mood, etc. All this information will help determine whether the change in behavior is only restricted to sleeping on a separate bed or effecting other areas of his functioning.

Talk to your child in a calm and non-threatening manner about these fears to have a better understanding of the situation. Ask him about other things that bother him or he is afraid of and how he think you as a parent can help him. Make sure that you are not harsh, critical or too anxious when you speak to him as he may shy away for talking openly.

Based on the nature of severity of what you further find after talking to him, if needed, write to us for further support. If the issue does not settle down despite talking to him, then he may also benefit from seeing a mental health expert as it would important to rule out and if required treat any form of anxiety, depression or other mood related disturbances.

**Query 7 & 8**

Oct 2015	Female	Age 14 to 18	My daughter studying at class 8 ,once she was a position holder
Oct 2015	Female	Age 14 to 18	But now she z taking fourth position while z still working hard she z nowadays very upset.

**Query by: Parent**  
**Response**

Is she upset about not doing as well as she used to do earlier in her studies or is there something other than the studies that is making her upset? Understanding this would help us guide you better.

Talk to her about the situation (not to lecture) so that she is able to open up and share her concerns. Evaluate her and your own expectations related to her grades to ensure that these are realistic. Unrealistic expectations related to performance, goals etc. can make children feel anxious and pulled down.

Since your daughter is going through adolescence, she may be experiencing emotions and challenges that are part and parcel of this stage. During the adolescent age (roughly starting around ten years and above), many children go through a series of normal emotional, physical and social changes. As a result of these changes there is more interest in peers, less interest in studies, spending time with family and adults, frequent arguments and need to exert one's individuality and identity etc. The adolescent period can be overwhelming for adolescents, especially if they lack correct information about the changes that they are experiencing or/and if they feel that there is no one that they can communicate with. It might help if you talk to your daughter in an open and friendly manner about these changes. Make sure to do it in a manner that allows her the space to talk rather than it being a lecture. Validate and normalize her feelings and let her know that she can talk to you if there is something bothering her or if she has any questions related to growing up. By communicating openly, you will be giving her an opportunity to discuss and share with you in case she is bothered about something and going through a difficult time

**Query 9**

Feb 2016	Female	Age 09 to 13	Depressed
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**Query by: Parent**  
**Response**

The information provided is unclear and insufficient to provide a response. Kindly elaborate on what you mean by 'depression'? What are the signs and symptoms? Has there been a recent change in the child's life? How are you currently helping the child cope with the situation?

**Query 10**

Feb 2016	Male	Age 09 to 13	My son is studying in class 7. Everyday when he comes home back from school at around 2:45 pm he feel so tired that he tries to sleep all day even till 8 o' clock in night. He is also getting too skinny. Why this is happening? Suggest me something that I can do for him.
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**Query by: Parent**  
**Response**

It is suggested that you show your son to a medical doctor in order to first evaluate whether the cause of tiredness and loss of weight is due to some physical condition or deficiency. If he gets a clean bill of health from the medical doctor, then we can explore the possible psychological reasons that may be causing these symptoms.

**Query 10**

Feb 2016	Female	Age 09 to 13	My child is in 6th class she always gets tense in little things. Before changing her section she was always happy and cheerful. She is also so weak .I dont understand why she is so weak after all she eats very much
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**Query by: Parent**  
**Response**

It is suggested that you show your daughter to a medical doctor in order to first evaluate whether the cause of her weakness is due to some physical condition or deficiency. If she gets a clean bill of health from the medical doctor, then we can explore the possible psychological reasons that may be causing these symptoms. Change can always be difficult for children who can be helped by talking to them about their concerns, validating these as normal and giving

them time to adjust to the change, encouraging them to make new friends and identifying ways of remaining in touch with the old friends.

**Query 10**

Feb 2016	Male	Age 09 to 13	Aoa Mairi baiti ALHAMDOLILAH studies mai Bohat achi hain position holder hain but school janay mai problem, confuse Bohat jaldi Hona and choti c baat pe pareshan Ho jati hain plz Muje suggest karin mai kaisay Handel karon
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**Query by: Parent**

**Response**

Some children are generally more anxious than others and tend to feel more sensitive about making mistakes, not getting good grades, etc. Some children also become more anxious if they are frequently scolded, put down and hit or witness parental conflict or any other stressful situation. Try to identify which out of these reasons could be adding to your child's behaviour so that it can be addressed accordingly. If it is more of a personality issue then let her know that it's okay to make mistakes and sometimes get confused and that other children also experience similar emotions. If it's something in her environment or parenting style, then try to change these patterns that may be affecting her negatively.