

TRAUMA SYMPTOMS - CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS

Birth - 2 years

- High anxiety manifested in crying, biting, thumb sucking, etc.
- Separation difficulties

2 Years - 6 Years

- Withdrawal - quiet, detached, mute
- Deny, avoid or ignore event
- Re-enact event
- Manifest fears - of new situations, strangers, certain places or objects
- Regression to earlier behaviour - bed wetting, thumb sucking, etc.
- Become very attached to caregivers - holding on to adults, not wanting to sleep alone, wanting to be held, etc.
- Any changes in routine may be seen as threatening
- Sleep disturbances - nightmares are common
- Does not understand death and the permanency of it

7 Years - 12 Years

- Performance decline - school, sports, hobbies, etc.
- Deny, avoid, ignore or reverse facts of event
- Behaviour changes - attention seeking, getting into trouble, etc.
- Mood changes - a quiet child becomes active and noisy; an active child becomes quiet and isolated
- Psychosomatic complaints - stomach aches, headaches, nausea, rashes etc.
- May regress to previous stages
- May withdraw and become isolated

Adolescents

- Acting out behaviours - alcohol abuse, running away, suicidal expression, etc.
- Low self-esteem - they may blame themselves
- Displaced anger onto inappropriate recipients - parents, siblings, etc.
- Suppress feelings to avoid dealing with incident
- May ask existential questions - question the meaning of life
- Fear the event may happen again