



# NC Family to Family Health Information Center

*"A beacon for families of children with special health care needs."*

NC Family to Family Health Information Center  
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## Mental Health Disorders and Mental Illness

**Mental health disorders or mental illness** are terms used to describe a psychological or physiological condition that causes a person to feel, think, and react differently to social situations. A mental health disorder or mental illness can cause a person to feel like they are in distress.

Some examples include mood disorders, anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders, eating disorders, personality disorders, and many other categories. Mental health services may be based in hospitals or in the community. Mental health professionals diagnose individuals using different methods, often evaluating a person's history and interviewing the person. Family members and friends are often interviewed as well.

Psychotherapy and psychiatric medication are two major treatment options, as well as supportive interventions. In North Carolina supportive interventions are delivered by Community Support Services. These services can include:

- Education and training of caregivers
- Prevention and therapeutic intervention for the child
- Assistance to help your child learn new skills to obtain his/her life goals
- Instruction in monitoring and self-management of symptoms
- Case management to arrange, link or integrate multiple services if needed

More services may be available, so be sure to ask your Service Provider.

For more information about Mental Health Treatment Services, visit:

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: <http://aacap.org/>
- North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services: <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/mhddsas/>
- United States Department of Health and Human Services– Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/child/childhealth.asp>

**To access these services, call your Local Management Entity (LME).**

For more information you may request a free copy of the NC Family to Family Health Information Center's Navigating and Negotiating Mental Health Services Packet.



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