

Informing Families

Building Trust

A Partnership for Better Communication
on Developmental Disability Issues in Washington State



The *What, Where, and How* of Mental Health Evaluations

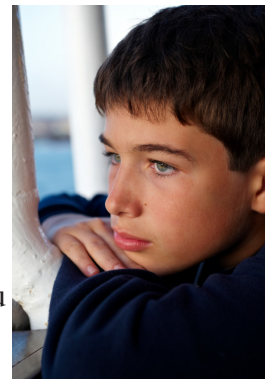
“My son has been having violent outbursts at school and has been sent home a number of times. We don’t know if this is a mental health issue or part of his developmental disability. Is there some way to find out what’s going on?”

Children and youth who are experiencing mental health problems should be evaluated by a mental health professional, preferably one with pediatric expertise in developmental disabilities.

If this includes prescription of psychoactive medication, its use should be integrated into the larger plan to build a supportive environment for the child/youth that includes psychosocial supports. The integration of psychiatric and psychosocial supports is considered best practice.

To receive a mental health evaluation:

- Ask your primary care doctor for a referral to a MH Professional or clinician for evaluation and assessment (private insurance/Apple Health).
- If you suspect a serious mental health disorder and are covered by Apple Health/Medicaid, request MH evaluation services through your local [Behavioral Health Organization](#) (BHO).
- If enrolled with DDA and unable to access this service through private insurance or Apple Health, you may request a MH evaluation and assessment with a DDA contracted resource.



RESOURCES

[Partnership Access Line \(PAL\)](#) for primary care providers. If your child is on psychiatric medications, or you are considering it, talk to your primary care provider about the Partnership Access Line. PAL employs child psychiatrists and social workers affiliated with Seattle Children’s Hospital to deliver its telephone-based consultation services for any type mental health issue. **Toll-Free: 866-599-7257.**

[Seattle Children’s Hospital Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine.](#) Diagnostic evaluations and short-term mental health treatment for children and teens up to age 18. *Many children have a complex set of symptoms, and the best course of treatment is not clear at first. A full diagnostic evaluation (two or three visits) can clarify why a child is having emotional and behavioral problems and how a mental health or medical professional can help.* **Toll-Free: 866-987-2000** (ask for *Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine*); **Direct Line to Psychiatry: 206-987-2164.**

For a listing of Seattle Children’s clinics in other areas of the state, visit: seattlechildrens.org/contact

[NW Autism Center.](#) Information and referral to services, providers, support and resources in the Spokane area and beyond. Visit nwaitism.org/directory for a listing of providers who conduct MH evaluations.

[UW Autism Center.](#) A non-profit organization that provides clinical services, research, and training devoted to supporting individuals and families affected by autism spectrum disorders (birth through young adulthood). **Toll-free Information and Resource line: 877-408-8922.**

For links to these and other mental health resources, visit: informingfamilies.org.