



## Making Your Appointment (continued...)

When you call, tell them you are calling to discuss some mental health issues with the doctor, what the behavior is, and why you feel it is critical. For example:

“Hi. This is Sandy Smith and I need to make an appointment for my son Sam Smith to see the doctor as soon as possible. He recently lost a close friend and he is not eating, sleeps all day, and does not enjoy activities that used to make him happy. The school is also reporting concerns with his behavior. I believe we need to be considered urgent because of the sudden changes and the impact on his home and school life. Can you see him right away or can you refer us to an appropriate facility for an evaluation?”

Be persistent if you are concerned. Do not let someone who has not seen your child decide if it is urgent or not.



### Prior to the Appointment



Before the appointment discuss with your child or youth why this is important. Help them see that their brain is as important as their stomach or heart. Tell them you are glad that you have a doctor (or other professional) that can help them understand what is happening in their brain. Let them know you are not doing this because they are “bad” or because you are tired of their behavior. You might ask them to write you and the doctor a letter about how they are feeling.

Before the appointment have the following ready:

- A written list of your concerns and observations so you are not rushed and forget important points.
- Any communications from the school.
- Anything else you think that would help, such a letter as discussed above.



### At the appointment:

- Present them with your written concerns, school communications, and letter if possible or necessary.
- Listen closely to their questions and assist your child or youth in answering them.
- Do NOT speak for your child or youth. Let them answer first and then you can add your observations. If they say nothing, ask them the question again. If they still do not answer, you answer if possible. Your child or youth may be embarrassed, afraid, or might be worried they will cry or show emotion.

#### General Questions You Might Ask

- What do you think is upsetting him/her?
- What do you recommend we do?
- Can you help us identify additional help?

## If the Doctor recommends mental health services...

- What types of changes in my child, youth, or family can expect as a result of this treatment?
- Where will my child or youth receive this treatment?  
How often and for how long will the treatment be necessary?
- How much will this treatment cost?
- Will my health insurance plan pay for the treatment?
- What other treatment options are available?
- Is this the least restrictive option for my child or youth?
- What will your role be in the treatment and developing the treatment plan?
- How often can we visit, phone, or contact our child or youth? (for inpatient services)
- What would be the next step after this treatment is completed?
- Can you put me in touch with another family that has used this particular treatment, program or facility?



## If the doctor recommends medication...

- What is the name of the medication?
- Is it called by any other name(s)?
- What is it used for?
- Is it used for anything other than what it is being used for in my child or youth?
- Are there other medications you could use instead?
- Why did you recommend this medication?
- What side effects can be expected?
- Are there side effects that can affect my child's or youth's school performance?
- What side effects should I call about immediately, and what side effects can wait until your office is open?
- Are there other medications or foods my child or youth should avoid while taking this medication?
- Are there any activities my child or youth should avoid while taking this medication?
- How long (days? weeks?) do you feel my child or youth may need this medication?
- How will we know if the medication is working?
- How long (days? weeks?) might that take before the medication starts to work?
- Will any tests or other blood work be done while using this medication?
- How often and where would these tests be done?
- When and how should I give the medication?
- What happens if we miss a dose?
- Can my child or youth become addicted to this medication?
- Do you have any written information on this drug?
- What is the cost of the medication?
- Is there a less expensive, generic version of this medication?
- Does the generic work as well as the brand name version of this medication?
- How will this be written into my child's or youth's treatment plan and shared with others on the care team, including those at school?