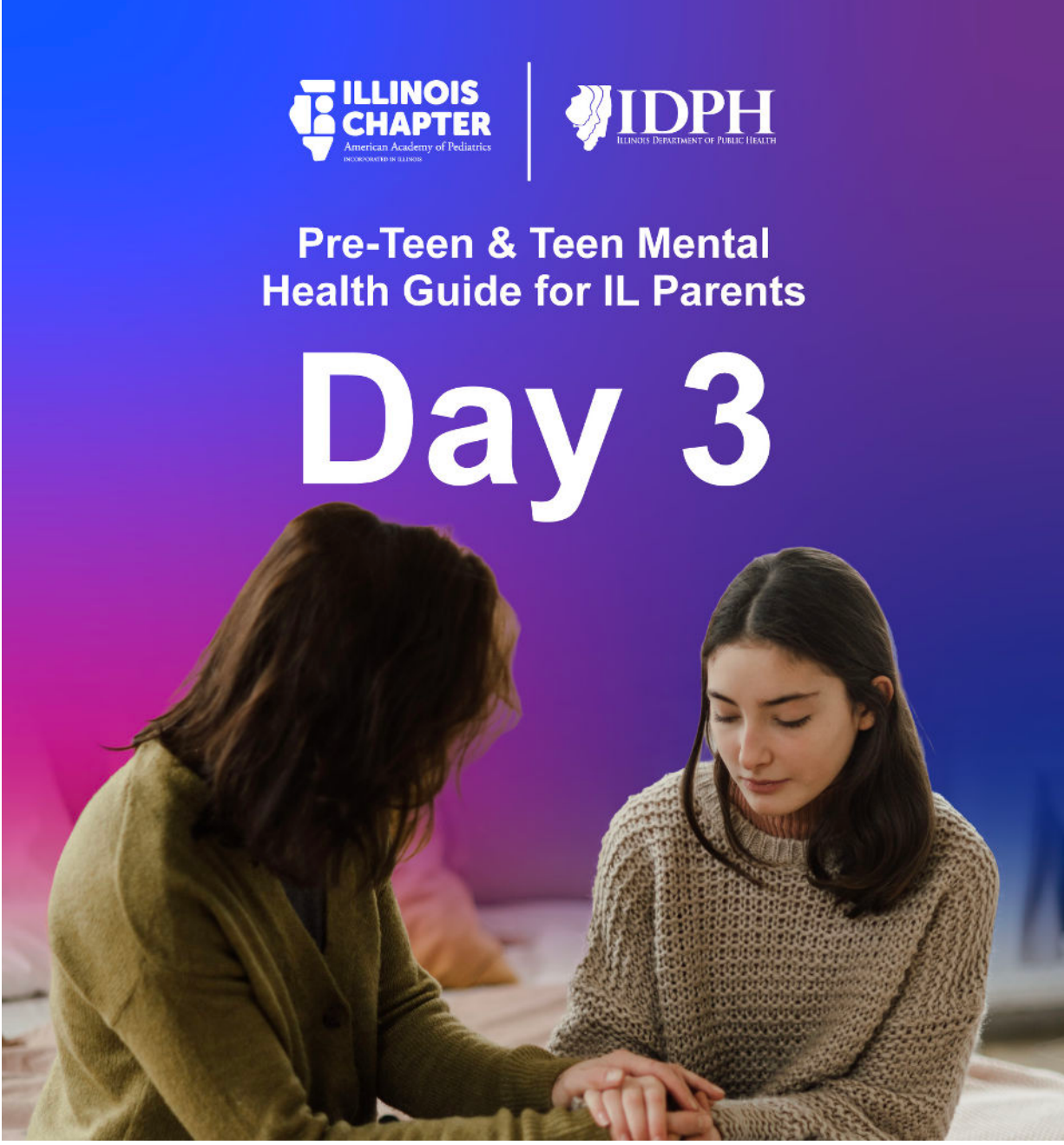


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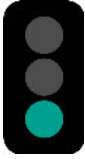


Hi <<First Name>>,

While mental health symptoms will vary child to child, you have the advantage of knowing what “normal” looks like for them. Today, let’s talk about trusting your instincts – and knowing when a concern needs action.

The Timeline That Matters

Here's what many parents don't realize:
A bad week is normal. A bad month needs attention. A bad season requires action.
One symptom for a few days? That's being human. Multiple symptoms for weeks? Time to dig deeper.



Green Lights: Typical Teen Turbulence (Watch with Compassion)

These usually pass on their own:

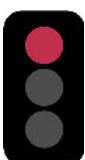
- Mood swings that last hours, not days
- Occasional "I hate everything" declarations (especially on Monday mornings)
- Sleeping in on weekends but maintaining regular school attendance
- Friend drama that resolves within a week
- Stress before big tests that eases after



Yellow Lights: Time to Pay Closer Attention

- **The Withdrawal Pattern:** Your social butterfly is suddenly always "too tired" for plans. Your family dinner chatterbox gives one-word answers. They're physically home but emotionally checked out.
- **The Anger Surge:** Everything sets them off. The wrong cereal brand causes a meltdown. A changed plan triggers rage. Your easy-going kid has become a ticking time bomb.
- **The Perfection Prison:** They're studying until 3 AM for a quiz worth 2% of their grade. One B+ sends them spiraling. They can't start projects because they might not be "perfect."

What to do: Start conversations. Use those scripts from yesterday. Document what you're seeing. Consider calling their pediatrician for guidance.



Red Lights: Time for Professional Help

DON'T WAIT – GET SUPPORT IF YOU SEE ANY OF THESE:

- Self-harm marks (cuts, burns, unexplained bruises)
- Talking about death, even jokingly: "Everyone would be better off without me"
- Giving away prized possessions or saying goodbyes
- Sudden dramatic mood improvement after deep depression (can signal a plan)
- Extreme weight changes in either direction
- Complete refusal to go to school for multiple days
- Substance use to cope with emotions
- Risky sexual behavior or relationships with concerning power dynamics

Your Action Plan

- **GREEN LIGHT:** Keep loving them through it. Stay available.
- **YELLOW LIGHT:** Schedule a pediatrician check-in. Say: "I've noticed some changes that concern me. Can we talk about mental health screening?"
- **RED LIGHT:** Call your pediatrician TODAY. If they're unavailable, call 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) or visit the Emergency Room for immediate guidance.

The Most Important Thing to Remember

If you are seeing one or more of these symptoms, calmly check in with your teen and ask about their mental and emotional well-being in a way that allows them to share things openly with you. Be available, but not over-bearing.

You're not overreacting. If your gut says something's off, listen. Better to have a pediatrician reassure you than to wait too long. Mental health is health — you wouldn't wait to treat a broken bone, don't wait to address emotional pain.

Helpful Resources:

- [Teen Mental Health: How to Know When Your Child Needs Help](#)
- [What to Do If Your Child Is in Crisis](#)

Tomorrow we'll tackle social media and screens.

Trust yourself — you've got this,
The ICAAP Team

Get Connected!



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