

## Mental disorders spread in young people's social networks

This study is the largest and most comprehensive so far on the spread of mental disorders in social networks, with more than 700,000 ninth-grade pupils from 860 Finnish schools participating. The adolescents were followed from the end of ninth grade for a median of 11 years.

The researchers demonstrated that the number of classmates diagnosed with a mental disorder was associated with a higher risk of receiving a mental disorder diagnosis later in life.

"The observed link was the strongest during the first year of follow-up in the study. This was not explained by a number of factors related to parents, school and residential area. The link was most pronounced in the case of mood, anxiety and eating disorders," says Associate Professor Christian Hakulinen of the University of Helsinki.

### Research enabled by comprehensive Finnish registers

According to Hakulinen, prior studies have yielded similar results: for example, American researchers have observed indications of depressive symptoms potentially being transmitted from one individual to another in social networks.

In prior research, however, social networks have typically been chosen independently by the research subjects, which may result in bias in the data. Hakulinen points out that school classes are social networks well suited to research, as people are usually not able to choose their classmates.

"Defining the social networks and following adolescents were made possible by extensive Finnish registers. The findings significantly deepen our understanding of how mental health problems develop and affect other people in our social networks," he says.

Hakulinen nevertheless notes that the connection observed in the study is not necessarily causal. Furthermore, the study did not investigate how mental disorders can potentially be transmitted between individuals.

"It may be possible, for instance, that the threshold for seeking help for mental health issues is lowered when there are one or more people in your social network who have already sought help for their problems. In fact, this kind of normalization of diagnosis and treatment can be considered beneficial contagion of mental disorders," Hakulinen says.

### More preventive measures?

Mental disorders are a significant global challenge, adversely affecting individuals, society and the economy. According to Hakulinen, anxiety and mood symptoms in particular have in recent years increased among young people.

Previous studies have shown that, in roughly half of all cases, the onset of mental disorders in adulthood occurs when people are under 18. In fact, Hakulinen emphasizes the importance of preventive measures and early intervention.

"When taking preventive measures, it's worthwhile considering that mental disorders can spread from one adolescent to another," Hakulinen says.

*Materials provided by University of Helsinki.*

---

**Parent Training Specialist I & II (CPTS-I-II) Training - September 12-13, 2024** - This live training is conducted by Growth Central Training on the Zoom platform. Two days- 7a PST-2p PST/ 10am EST-5pm EST. The Seminar is approved by the National Anger Management Association (NAMA). The live training fulfills ALL the requirements for (NAMA) Certified Parent Training Specialist-I,II (CAMS-I,-II) including tuition and supervision. **\*\*Seats are limited\*\*** [Register Online](#). For more information go [here](#).

---

## NAMA now issues Digital Certificates for all new certification applicants

Digital certificates for mental health professionals are electronic documents used to certify the identity, qualifications, and credentials of individuals in the field of mental health. NAMA will begin issuing digital certificates to new Specialists in 2024. Here's a summary of their advantages:

- 1. Identity Verification:** Digital certificates help in verifying the identity of the mental health professional. They contain personal information like name, professional title, and the organization they are affiliated with.
- 2. Credential Authentication:** They confirm the professional's qualifications, such as degrees, licenses, and certifications. This assures clients and colleagues that the individual is qualified to practice in their field.
- 3. Security and Privacy:** Digital certificates often include cryptographic keys for secure communication. This is particularly important for protecting sensitive client information and ensuring confidentiality in digital interactions.
- 4. Electronic Signatures:** These certificates can be used to digitally sign documents, such as treatment plans or consent forms, validating their authenticity and integrity.

5. **Compliance with Regulations:** They help mental health professionals comply with legal and ethical standards, such as HIPAA in the United States, which mandates the protection of patient health information.
6. **Online Verification:** Clients, insurance companies, and other professionals can verify the credentials of a mental health professional online, enhancing trust and transparency in the profession.
7. **Ease of Use:** Digital certificates simplify the process of credential verification, making it more efficient compared to traditional paper-based methods.
8. **Elevate professional identity** with prestigious, easily shareable digital certificates that announce your achievements and expertise.
9. **Experience the confidence** of validated expertise with digital certificates that recognize professional growth and commitment to mastering a specific specialty.
10. **Enhance your online presence** with digital credentials that seamlessly integrate with professional profiles, websites, and email signatures.

Digital certificates for anger management and mental health professionals are essential tools for establishing trust, ensuring privacy, and maintaining compliance in the increasingly digital landscape of healthcare. For more information go to <https://sertifier.com/>