

New App

Targeting

Vulnerable Children

Blue Whale

Montgomery County Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services (*ADAMHS*) is concerned about a social media app known as **'Blue Whale'** that is targeting youth and has been linked to the deaths of more than 100 people.

Since its creation in 2013, Blue Whale has used horrifying videos to lure children into the app before psychologically manipulating them. The majority of children were young girls, who were targeted specifically for their vulnerability. The app also can be very difficult to remove once installed.

To "win," the person is supposed to complete suicide.

The app reportedly hacks into personal information that administrators use to threaten the player's family or releases personal information until the player kills themselves.

The Blue Whale Challenge app has since been removed from Apple's iOS store and Google Play store.

So far, the app has been linked to the deaths of more than 100 young people around the world.

What to Look For

Like adults, children will respond to mental health issues in different ways, but ADAMHS has compiled some common signs to which parents, friends and teachers can be alert:

- Becoming withdrawn from friends and family
- Persistent low mood and unhappiness
- Tearfulness and irritability
- Worries that stop them from carrying out day to day tasks
- Sudden outbursts of anger directed at themselves or others
- Loss of interest in activities that they used to enjoy
- Problems eating or sleeping

If you're concerned, speak to your family doctor. If a child has been self-harming, the doctor will be able to treat injuries and offer medical advice. They may also refer your child to a clinical therapist for additional help. ADAMHS also suggests speaking to your child's teacher. Teachers are becoming increasingly aware of child self-harm and possible connections to mental illness. The school should be able to provide a trained staff member with whom your child can speak.

For additional resource assistance, please call Montgomery County ADAMHS, 937-443-0416