

SHOOTER'S LIFE SHOWED A NEED FOR TREATMENT

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Allen Griffin Jr., had all the signs of someone needing professional help.

He had been withdrawn, moody, depressed since his grandmother's death last October, followed by the breakup of a relationship soon after. He talked about killing himself. And, on Tuesday, the day he killed three people, he talked to himself and told people to say the Lord's Prayer.

And Griffin, who was never diagnosed with an emotional disorder, may have been genetically predisposed to a mental illness. His mother suffers from schizophrenia, a brain disease that can be passed from generation to generation. At 21, he also was at the age -- late teens to early 20s -- at which the disease appears in most people.

Families often have trouble determining when a person **needs** professional help, mental health workers said Wednesday. Sometimes it's knowing what signs to look **for** .

"When people aren't themselves, and it lasts more than a few days, that's one of the things that should be a red flag," Dr. Hussein Manji, director of the schizophrenia and mood disorders program at Wayne State University, said Wednesday.

"Even if you think you can understand the reason why a person is acting differently, if it persists, you **need** to get **treatment**."

Symptoms of mental illness are often triggered by a traumatic event. Sometimes it's obvious a person **needs** help. People may hear voices or think someone is out to get them, said Dr. Mark Fettman, an Ann Arbor psychiatrist.

But usually the signs are more subtle.

"They may be more isolated than normal, more suspicious," said Manji. "Sometimes it's a sleep pattern changing."

Prolonged feelings of worthlessness, being unable to think or concentrate, losing interest in activities or withdrawing from friends and family can be signs. So can depression or obsession with religion.

Most people with a mental illness or mood disorder are not dangerous. With **treatment** -- typically medications and therapy -- most can be helped, Manji said.

For more information on mental health issues, see your doctor, or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the Mental Health Association in Michigan, 15920 W. Twelve Mile, Southfield 48076.

Caption: Photo

Allen Griffin Jr. ***

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