

Teen Depression: What You Need To Know

The teen years can be tough. Teens are forming an identity apart from their parents, grappling with gender issues and emerging sexuality, and making independent decisions for the first time in their lives. Occasional bad moods are to be expected, but depression is different.

Older children and teens with depression may sulk, get into trouble at school, be negative and irritable, and feel misunderstood. If you're unsure if an adolescent in your life is depressed or just "being a teenager," consider how long the symptoms have been present, how severe they are, and how different the teen is acting from his or her usual self. Teens with depression may also have other disorders such as anxiety, eating disorders, or substance abuse. They may also be at higher risk for suicide.

Children and teenagers usually rely on parents, teachers, or other caregivers to recognize their suffering and get them the treatment they need. Many teens don't know where to go for mental health treatment or believe that treatment won't help. Others don't get help because they think depression symptoms may be just part of the typical stress of school or being a teen. Some teens worry what other people will think if they seek mental health care.

Depression often persists, recurs, and continues into adulthood, especially if left untreated. If you suspect a child or teenager in your life is suffering from depression, speak up right away.

Quick Tips for Talking to Your Depressed Child or Teen:

- ***Offer emotional support, understanding, patience, and encouragement.***
- ***Talk to your child, not necessarily about depression, and listen carefully.***
- ***Never discount the feelings your child expresses, but point out realities and offer hope.***
- ***Never ignore comments about suicide.***
- ***Remind your child that with time and treatment, the depression will lift.***

Source:

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression-what-you-need-to-know/index.shtml>