

Parents & Teen Depression

Signs of Depression

Depressed, irritable, sad, empty mood, angry emotional

Decreased interest or enjoyment in once-favorite activities and people

Changes in appetite, eating too much or too little, significant weight loss or gain

Sleeping too much or too little

Physical agitation or slowness

Fatigue or loss of energy

Low self-esteem, feeling guilty (with no clear cause)

Decreased ability to concentrate, or make decisions

Unexplained aches and pains

Recurrent suicidal thoughts or behavior

From: www.familyaware.org (Teen Depression)

What Parents May Notice

Irritable or cranky mood, preoccupation that life is meaningless

Loss of interest in sports or other activities, withdrawal from friends and family, relationships problems

Failure to gain weight as normally expected

Excessive late-night activities, having difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, having trouble getting up in the morning, frequently late for school

Taking a long time to complete normal tasks, pacing back and forth, and/or excessive repetition of behaviors

Social withdrawal, napping, withdrawal from activities, boredom

Making critical comments about themselves, having behavior problems at home or school, being overly sensitive to rejection

If you see 5 of these symptoms most of the day for at least 2 weeks, it may be depression.

Depression Can Go Unrecognized

People with depression may not realize they are depressed.

Because self-critical thinking is part of depression, some people might mistakenly think of themselves as a failure, a bad student, a quitter, a slacker, a loser, or a bad person.

Tips for Talking to a Depressed Teen

Offer support

Let depressed teenagers know that you're there for them, fully and unconditionally. Hold back from asking a lot of questions (teenagers don't like to feel patronized or crowded), but make it clear that you're ready and willing to provide whatever support they need.

Be gentle but persistent

Don't give up if your adolescent shuts you out at first. Talking about depression can be very tough for teens. Be respectful of your child's comfort level while still emphasizing your concern and willingness to listen.

Listen without lecturing

Resist any urge to criticize or pass judgment once your teenager begins to talk. The important thing is that your child is communicating. Avoid offering unsolicited advice or ultimatums as well.

Validate feelings

Don't try to talk teens out of their depression, even if their feelings or concerns appear silly or irrational to you. Simply acknowledge the pain and sadness they are feeling. If you don't, they will feel like you don't take their emotions seriously.

From: helpguide.org (Teen Depression-Guide For Parents)