

What Does Depression Look Like?

These are the symptoms...

- Depressed or **irritable** mood most of the day, nearly every day
- Decreased interest or pleasure in all or almost all activities
- Significant weight loss or gain
- Sleeping too much, or sleeping too little
- Agitated, can't stay still, restless
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt
- Difficulty concentrating or thinking
- Recurrent thoughts of death
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Other things you may notice...

- **Symptoms of anxiety** (frequent worries and fears, racing heart, sweaty palms, nervousness, "edginess," nightmares, panic attacks)
- **Physical symptoms** (headaches, stomachaches, numbness, difficulty breathing, heart pounding, etc.)
- **Change in day to day functioning** (example – perhaps someone who is typically outgoing and participates in lots of activities becomes more silent and withdrawn)
- **Acting out behavior** (being rebellious, breaking rules, being defiant, threatening to run away, delinquent acts)

What to do if you are concerned about your teen...

- Approach your teen in a gentle, non-judgmental way
- Give your teen specific examples of behaviors that are worrying you (e.g., avoids having dinner with the family when he/she used to do so on a regular basis, no longer plays basketball with the neighbors after school); share your observations
- Talk about your teen's good qualities and strengths
- Offer caring statements like "I love you and I am here for you. My job is to keep you healthy and safe"
- Discuss and clarify treatment options

Help your teen to talk...

- Allow your teen to share his/her point of view
- Show respect
- Acknowledge and validate teen's feelings
- Paraphrase or summarize to make sure that you understand what he/she said
- Give your teen your full attention
- Stop what you were doing or set-up a time to talk
- Remain quiet
- Listen to what your teen has to say
- Refrain from jumping in to fix the problem
- Use encouraging non-verbal behaviors

Help your teen learn healthy coping skills...

- Teach your teen relaxation techniques to fall asleep, strategies for getting up in the morning, and encourage consistent routines
- Encourage your teen to practice deep breathing exercises
- Help your teen break large tasks (school work and/or chores) into smaller, accomplishable portions
- Remind your teen to strive for excellence, not perfection
- Help your teen enhance his/her ability to develop back up plans
- Assess and ensure that your teen has a support network of people (friends, teachers, coaches, siblings, etc.) that he/she can rely on during difficult times
- Suggest that your teen schedules relaxation time (exercise, play, extra-curricular activities) into every day
- Talk with your teen about his/her coping skills (exercise, music, writing, etc.) and brainstorm about when to use those skills

Adapted from Break Free From Depression Curriculum by:



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