



RUTGERS

Robert Wood Johnson
Medical School



Teen Depression Guide for Adolescents, Families, and Friends ***Greater New Brunswick and Middlesex County***

Depression

Depression may be described as feeling sad, blue, unhappy, miserable, or down in the dumps. Most of us feel this way at one time or another for short periods. Clinical depression is a mood disorder in which feelings of sadness, loss, anger, or frustration interfere with everyday life.

Young People Who Might be at Risk for Depression

- Mood disorders run in the family.
- Experience a stressful event (death in the family, divorcing parents, bullying, a breakup with a boyfriend or girlfriend, or failing in school).
- Have low self-esteem or are very critical of themselves.
- Have trouble being social.
- Have learning disabilities.
- Have a chronic illness.
- There are family problems.

Common Symptoms of Depression

- Frequent irritability with sudden bursts of anger.
- More sensitive to criticism.
- Complaints of headaches, stomach aches or other body problems and may go to the nurse's office a lot.
- Withdrawal from people like parents or some friends.
- Not enjoying activities, they usually like.
- Feeling tired for much of the day.
- Feeling sad, anxious or empty (feel nothing) most of the time.
- Grades are dropping.
- Feeling restless or have trouble sitting still.
- Trouble concentrating, remembering information, or making decisions.
- Thinking about dying or suicide or tries to harm themselves.

How to Get Help

- Talk to a trusted adult, such as a parent or guardian, teacher, or a school counselor. If not comfortable talking to an adult, talk to a trusted friend. If not sure where to turn, can use TXT 4 HELP Interactive (www.nationalsafeplace.org/txt-4-help), which allows you to text live with a mental health professional.
- Make an appointment with your doctor for an evaluation. Your doctor can make sure you don't have a physical illness that may be affecting your mental health or can speak to you about seeing a mental health professional.

How Is Depression Treated?

Depression is usually treated with psychotherapy, medication, or a combination of the two.

Psychotherapy (sometimes called "talk therapy") is a term for treatment techniques that can help you identify and manage troubling emotions, thoughts, and behavior.

What Else Can I Do to Manage Depression?

Be patient and know that treatment takes time to work. In the meantime, you can:

- Stay active and exercise, even if it's just going for a walk.
- Try to keep a regular sleep schedule.
- Spend time with friends and family.
- Break down school or work tasks into smaller ones and organize them in order of what needs to get done first. Then, do what you can.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY PHONE: 911

How to Help Someone Who Might Be Depressed

If you think a friend might have depression, first help him or her talk to a trusted adult who can connect your friend to a health professional. You can also:

- Be supportive, patient, and encouraging, even if you don't fully understand what's going on.
- Invite your friend to activities, social events, or just to hang out.
- Remind your friend that getting help is important and that with time and treatment, he or she will feel better.
- Never ignore comments about death and suicide, even if it seems like a joke or overdramatic. Talking about suicide is not just a bid for attention but should be taken seriously.
- Talk to a trusted adult such as a parent, teacher or older sibling as soon as you can.

Resources for Suicide or Self Harm

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Phone: **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

TTY for deaf and hard of hearing: **1-800-799-4889**

Website: www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

The Crisis Text

Trained crisis counselor will respond to you with support and information over text message.

Text **"HOME"** to **741741**

Local Resources

Depression Bipolar Support Alliance NJ (DBSA)

DBSA is a mood-disorder self-help support group working to improve the lives of people living with a mood disorder, and their loved ones.

Additional languages: ES

Phone: 908-672-9250

George J. Otlowski, Sr. Center for Mental Health Care

Offers treatment to Middlesex County residents (5 years old and up) for a wide range of emotional disorders, including anxiety, depression, family, and other problems of daily living.

Additional languages: ES

Phone: 732-442-1666

NAMI New Jersey

The National Alliance on Mental Illness NJ (NAMI) is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by mental illness. NAMI offers peer-led programs and support groups that provide outstanding free education, skills training and support.

Additional Languages: ES, ZH and some South Asian languages

Phone: 732-940-0991

Website: <http://www.naminj.org/>

Additional Resources

National Institute of Mental Health's pamphlet, *Teen Depression* at: https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/teen-depression/teendepression_20-mh-8089_150205.pdf

Behavioral Health Referral and Resource Guide: Greater New Brunswick and Middlesex County, 2019 Edition at: <http://rwjms.rutgers.edu/BehavioralHealthGuide/>

Language Directory:

ES = Spanish

ZH = Chinese

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