

Signs of a Depressed Teenager

We all know how complicated and demanding the teen years can be. Sometimes the changes and pressures that teenagers experience can be overwhelming to them. Therefore, it isn't surprising that from time to time our teenagers may feel down or discouraged.

When should we get concerned about this down time? Parents who know their teenagers will recognize when the down time has gone on too long but generally if it continues for more than two weeks and is affecting your relationship then it is probably a sign that he or she is suffering from depression. As a friend or parent, you can help.

What are the symptoms to watch for?



- Is your teenager talking about feeling sad or empty, hopeless, pessimistic or worthless?
- Does your teenager seem to be unable to make rational decisions? Have they lost interest in ordinary activities such as sports or friends?
- Is your teenager having problems at school and / or with family?
- Is your teenager complaining of headaches, backaches or stomachaches? Are they having trouble sleeping or experiencing a loss of appetite/ gaining weight?
- Have you seen a sudden change in their behavior such as wanting to be alone all the time or cutting classes/ dropping hobbies or activities?

Never to be taken lightly, “Has your teenager talked about suicide, or do they seem obsessed with death?”. Many of these behaviors are not uncommon for teenagers to experience but they can also be signs of clinical depression if the symptoms continue. We can never assume that our teenager recognizes their problem. If you suspect a problem, consult a professional counselor who can evaluate the problem and offer treatment or referrals.