

TEEN DEPRESSION

Cats Connected: Teen Depression

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Teen Depression

By: The Mayo Clinic at <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/teen-depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20350985>

Teen depression is a serious mental health problem that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest in activities. It affects how you think, feel and behave, and it can cause emotional, functional and physical problems.

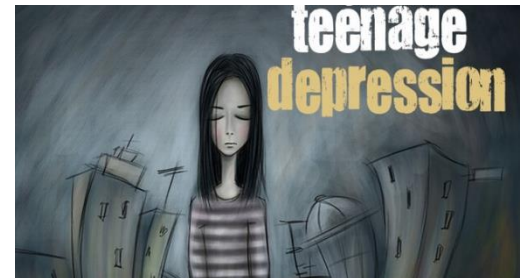
Although depression can occur at any time in life, symptoms may be different between teens and adults. Issues such as peer pressure, academic expectations and maturation can bring a lot of ups and downs for teens. But for some teens, the lows are more than just temporary feelings — they're a symptom of depression.

Teen depression isn't a weakness or something that can be overcome with willpower — it can have serious

consequences and requires long-term treatment. For most teens, depression symptoms ease with treatment such as medication and psychological counseling.

Teen depression signs and symptoms include a change from previous attitudes and behaviors that can cause significant distress and problems at school or home, in social activities or other areas of life.

It can be difficult to tell the difference between ups and downs that are just part of being a teenager and teen depression. Talk with an adult who can help you determine whether you seem capable of managing challenging feelings, or if life seems overwhelming.



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Learn what factors increase the risk of developing or triggering teen depression.

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Causes of Depression

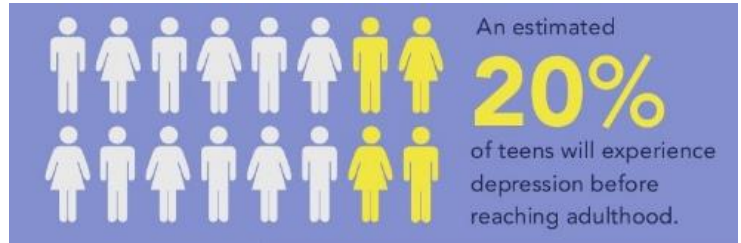
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It's not known exactly what causes depression, but a variety of factors may be involved. These include:

- 🐾 **Biological chemistry.** Neurotransmitters are naturally occurring brain chemicals that carry signals to other parts of your brain and body. When these chemicals are abnormal or impaired, the function of nerve receptors and nerve systems change, leading to depression.
- 🐾 **Hormones.** Changes in the body's balance of hormones may be involved in causing or triggering depression.
- 🐾 **Inherited traits.** Depression is more common in people whose blood relatives also have the condition.
- 🐾 **Learned patterns of negative thinking.** Teen depression may be linked to learning to feel helpless — rather than learning to feel capable of finding solutions for life's challenges.
- 🐾 **Early childhood trauma.** Traumatic events during childhood, such as physical or emotional abuse, or loss of a parent, may cause changes in the brain that make a person more susceptible to depression.



https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/4x4xjj/depression-steals-your-soul-and-then-it-takes-your-friends



Risk Factors for Depression

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Many factors increase the risk of developing or triggering teen depression, including:

- 🐾 Having issues that negatively impact self-esteem, such as obesity, peer problems, long-term bullying or academic problems
- 🐾 Having been the victim or witness of violence, such as physical or sexual abuse
- 🐾 Having other conditions, such as bipolar disorder, an anxiety disorder, a personality disorder, anorexia or bulimia
- 🐾 Having a learning disability or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- 🐾 Having ongoing pain or a chronic physical illness such as cancer, diabetes or asthma
- 🐾 Having a physical disability
- 🐾 Having certain personality traits, such as low self-esteem or being overly dependent, self-critical or pessimistic
- 🐾 Abusing alcohol, nicotine or other drugs
- 🐾 Being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender in an unsupportive environment
- 🐾 Having experienced recent stressful life events, such as parental divorce, parental military service or the death of a loved one
- 🐾 Having family problems

Signs and Symptoms of Depression

By: <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/parents-guide-to-teen-depression.htm>

Signs and Symptoms of Teen Depression

Sadness or hopelessness	Restlessness and agitation
Irritability, anger, or hostility	Feelings of worthlessness and guilt
Tearfulness or frequent crying	Lack of enthusiasm and motivation
Withdrawal from friends and family	Fatigue or lack of energy
Loss of interest in activities	Difficulty concentrating
Poor school performance	Unexplained aches and pains
Changes in eating and sleeping habits	Thoughts of death or suicide

Depression in teens can look very different from depression in adults. Teens with depression don't necessarily appear sad. Instead, irritability, anger, and agitation may be the most prominent.

Tips for Helping a Depressed Friend

By: <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/teenagers-guide-to-depression.htm>

Depressed teens typically rely on their friends more than their parents or other adults in their lives, so you may find yourself in the position of being the first—or only—person that they talk to about their feelings. While this might seem like a huge responsibility, there are many things you can do to help.

- Get your friend to talk to you.** Starting a conversation about depression can be daunting, but you can say something simple: "You seem like you are really down, and not yourself. I really want to help you. Is there anything I can do?"
- Know that your friend doesn't expect you to have the answers.** Your friend probably just needs someone to listen and be supportive. By listening and responding in a non-judgmental and reassuring manner, you are helping in a major way.
- Encourage your friend to get help.** Urge your depressed friend to talk to a parent, teacher, or counselor. It might be scary for your friend to admit to an authority figure that there is a problem. Having you there might help, so offer to go along for support.
- Stick with your friend through the hard times.** Depression can make people do and say things that are hurtful or strange. But your friend is going through a very difficult time, so try not to take it personally. Once your friend gets help, he or she will go back to being the person you know and love. In the meantime, make sure you have other friends or family taking care of you. Your feelings are important and need to be respected, too.
- Speak up if your friend is suicidal.** If your friend is joking or talking about suicide, giving possessions away, or saying goodbye, tell a trusted adult immediately. Your only responsibility at this point is to get your friend help, and get it fast. Even if you promised not to tell, your friend needs your help. It's better to have a friend who is temporarily angry at you than one who is no longer alive.