

Depression in Adolescents



Teaneck Public Schools
April 5, 2022
7:30 PM



Workshop Objectives

- Examine and discuss the causes for depression in adolescents.
- Identify the signs of depression in adolescents.
- Understand how to proactively respond to signs of depression.
- Identify and examine the resources available for responding to depression in adolescents.



Your Role as a Parent

- Be present for your child!
- Show and communicate your unconditional love.
- Keep communication channels open.
- Identify feelings and emotions without shame.





Adolescent Depression

Peer pressure

Academic expectations

Changing bodies

More than temporary



Causes of Adolescent Depression

Often begins in adolescents

Brain chemistry

Hormones

Inherited traits

Early childhood trauma

Learned patterns of negative thinking



Symptoms of Adolescent Depression

- A change in attitude
- Problems socially, and/or at school
- Change in behavior that result in problems at home or school





Emotional Changes

- Sadness with crying spells for no apparent reason
- Heightened frustration or feelings of anger, easily triggered
- Feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness or emptiness
- Irritability, easily annoyed
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Low self-esteem
- Feelings of guilt





Emotional Changes (continued)

- Fixation on past failures or events
- Self-blame and/or criticism
- Difficulty with concentration
- Feeling that the future is grim or bleak
- Frequent thoughts of death, dying, or suicide





Behavioral Changes

- Tiredness, loss of energy
- Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Changes in appetite, decreased or increased
- Use of alcohol or drugs
- Agitation or restlessness
- Slowed thinking, speaking, movement
- Complaints of body aches and headaches





Behavioral Changes (continued)

- Social isolation
- Poor school performance or frequent absences from school
- Less attention to personal hygiene
- Angry outbursts, acting out behavior
- Self-harm
- Making a suicide plan or a suicide attempt





Risk Factors

- Issues that negatively impact self-esteem: obesity, social issues, bullying, low academic performance
- Victim of violence, including witnessing violence
- Anxiety, bipolar disorder
- Learning disability or ADHD
- Chronic pain or another physical illness
- Low self-esteem
- A gender-related unsupportive environment
- Abuse of alcohol, nicotine or other drugs



Risk Factors (continued)

- Family history of depression, bipolar disorder
- Family history of alcohol or drug abuse
- Family member who died by suicide
- Dysfunctional family and/or family conflict
- A recent stressful life event such as divorce, recent move, or death





Depression and Substance Abuse:



- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Vapes
- E-cigs





How do you know if your child is involved in “risky” behavior:

- Rapid changes in behavior
- Not following routines
- Decreased interest in activities
- Decline in academic performance
- Bloodshot eyes
- Alcohol on breath
- Slurring of speech
- Inability to balance
- Erratic and/or aggressive behavior
- Lethargic behavior
- Sleeping often
- Lack of interest in activities and/or school work
- Stealing (money or items) to pay for substances





Talk to your child if you suspect
your child is depressed and
abusing substances.



[Teen drug abuse: Help your teen avoid drugs - Mayo Clinic](#)



Suicide and Self-Harm Signs to Watch for...

- Isolation from family and friends
- Problems eating or sleeping
- Mood swings
- Reckless behavior
- Decrease in academic performance
- Giving away belongings
- Feelings of hopelessness; feeling a burden
- Talks about suicide and/or death
- Drawing or writing about suicide

Normal Teenage Behavior vs. Red Flag

- Ups and downs of being a teenager
- Talk with your teen: keep communication lines open
- Identify feelings
- Determine if your child is capable of managing life's challenges, their own emotions, or if it seems overwhelming
- Determine if your child is overwhelmed





Depression Untreated

Emotional, behavioral, and health problems

Alcohol and drug misuse/abuse

Academic problems

Family conflicts

Social conflicts

Involvement with the juvenile justice system

Suicide attempts or suicide



Prevention

- Control or limit stress
- Teach resilience and boost self-esteem
- Reach out to friends
- Find social support
- Communication





Communication

- Talk about feelings; be a safe person to talk to and understand them
- Reassure how much you love them
- Pay attention to them and respond, “That sounds really hard...I’ve felt that way too...”
- Do fun things together
- Watch their social media
- Seek out therapy if needed





When to See a Doctor...

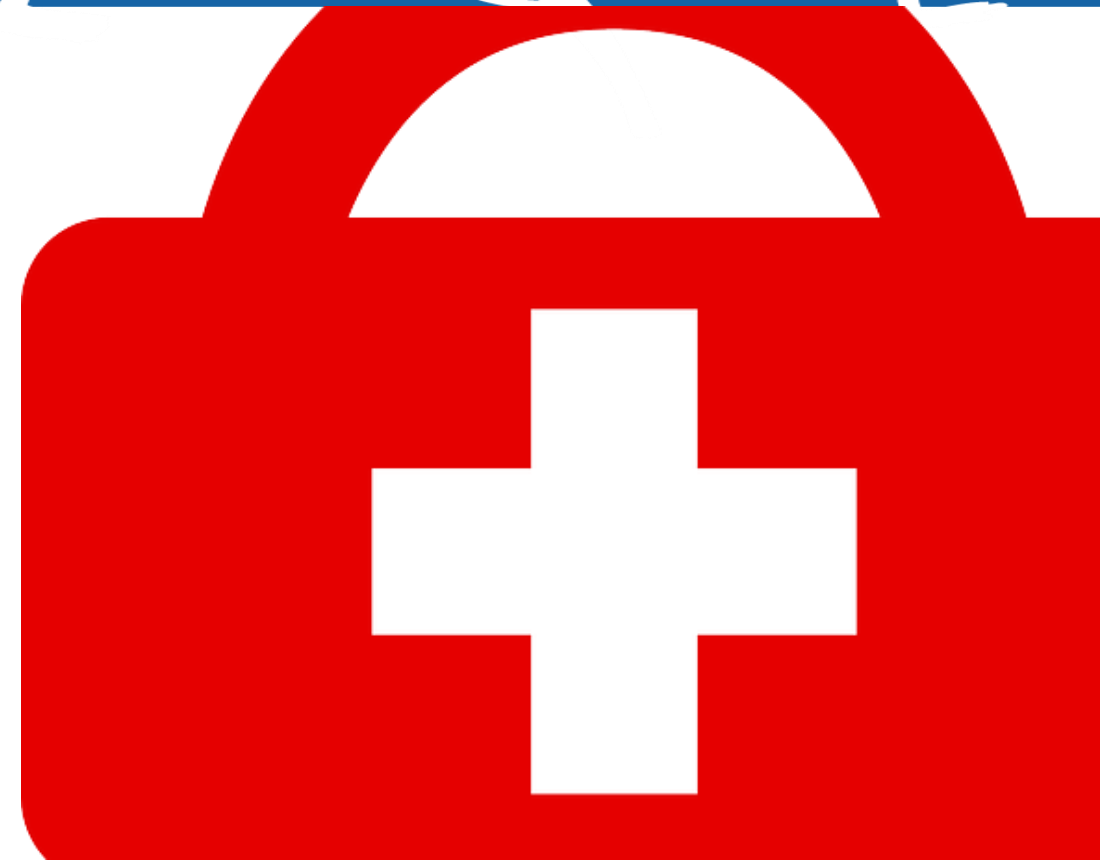
- When signs and symptoms interfere with your teen's life, family relationships, and/or social interactions
- When you are concerned about your teen's safety
- Symptoms get worse

Contact teen's doctor/pediatrician, school nurse, or guidance counselor



Medication

- Thorough evaluation before starting medical treatment by a professional
- Detailed review of potential risk factors
- Assessment for another mental illness
- Evaluation of family history of mental illness or suicide
- Discuss all treatment options





Treatment and Intervention...

- Behavioral therapies:
 - cognitive
 - interpersonal





Mindfulness and the Treatment of Depression

Study on the effects of mindfulness interventions on depression among adolescents

Reduced depression

Trained clinicians encourage mindfulness meditation

Prevention and treatment for



Mindfulness Resources

- <https://www.mindful.org/mindfulness-for-kids/>
- Mindfulness Meditation for Kids - 5 Minutes Guided Meditation for Children
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZ_wdeog5Ek
- Mindfulness Meditation for Kids: Breathing Exercises
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bk_qU7I-fcU
- Article about teaching mindfulness on Headspace:
<https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids>





Key Protective Factors

- Teach problem-solving in non-violent ways
- Strong friend and family connections
- Maintain strong community connections
- Restricted access to lethal means of suicide
- Cultural and religious beliefs that support self-preservation
- Access to appropriate clinical intervention: psychotherapy, family therapy, medication
- Access to good medical and mental health care



Responding Proactively to Signs of Depression or Suicidal Thoughts

- Take comments seriously and talk about it immediately!
- Take immediate action if necessary.
- Do not leave your child alone if you suspect they are in danger of self-harm.





Seek Immediate Help

National Suicide Prevention Hotline-

800-273-8255

Hope for Suicide Prevention in New Jersey-

855-654-6735

webchat on suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat

Hotlines are available at

24 hours a day, 7 days a week



Practical tips for an emotionally healthy adolescent:

1. Be emotionally present for your child

- Leave loving messages on their voicemail
- Send them kind and supportive text messages
- Leave notes and letters for them
- Put your phone away

2. Limit their technology AND yours

- Teach your child other ways to stay occupied
- Keep phones out of the bedroom at night
- Set a rule to charge phones in the kitchen

3. Provide your child with a balanced lifestyle

- Encourage healthy eating habits
- Make sure your child is getting enough sleep
- Enjoy the outdoors



“Provide opportunities for boredom - because boredom is the moment when creativity awakens”

Dr. Luis Rojas Marcos, Psychiatrist



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<https://www.nj.gov/education/safety/wellness/mh/index.shtml>

Mental Health

According to a [2021 report](#) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), of individuals ages 13-17, 14% experience mood disorders, 32% experience anxiety disorders, and 19% experience behavior disorders. Common diagnoses for children aged 3-17 years include attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), behavioral/conduct problems, anxiety, and depression.

Schools are in a distinct position to recognize the early signs of mental, behavioral, and developmental disorders, provide social-emotional support services, and foster skills necessary to address challenges during the adolescent years. In doing so, schools can contribute to the overall emotional, social and academic success of each student.

NJDOE Mental Health-Related Resources



New Jersey Comprehensive School-Based Mental Health Webinar Series



For Parents



For Students



[For School Leaders / Educators](#)



Professional Organizations for School Health Personnel



Other Related Organizations



Research and Publications



State and Federal Government Agencies



What's New

- [New Jersey Comprehensive School-Based Mental Health Resource Guide](#)

- [Overview of the New Jersey Comprehensive School-Based Mental Health Resource Guide](#)

- New Jersey Comprehensive School-Based Mental Health Webinar Series

- Webinar 1: Developing a MTSS Framework
- Webinar 2: Needs Assessment and Resource Mapping
- Webinar 3: Establishing Universal Prevention
- Webinar 4: Establishing Tiered Supports (Tiers 2 & 3)

- [Protecting Youth Mental Health - The U.S. Surgeon General Advisory](#)



<https://www.nj.gov/education/safety/wellness/loss/>



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Suicide Prevention and Other Traumatic Loss

Suicide is a serious public health problem that causes pain, suffering, and can have a profound effect on the entire community. According to 2019 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the 14th leading cause of death in New Jersey and the third leading cause of death for youth ages 10 to 24. In comparison to the national average New Jersey continues to have a lower rate of suicide; regardless, suicide remains a priority area to combat within the state. Provided below are resources and information on school requirements for addressing these events and supportive resources for prevention and intervention.

Related Statutes & Regulations

All references below can be found at [New Jersey Legislature's Website](#) and at [Rutgers School of Law](#)



Additional Resource:

<https://www.performcarenj.org/>

Coronavirus update: The best way to apply for eligibility for intellectual and developmental disability (I/DD) services through CSOC is through our online [Family Portal](#). Get more information about the [I/DD application](#). Additional COVID-19 resources are [also available](#).

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