Recognizing Depression in Teens

What Is Depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that affects the way you think and feel. The most common symptom is a feeling of deep sadness. Teens who are depressed may also:

- Feel hopeless
- Feel that life isn't worth living
- Feel angry, irritable or frustrated
- Have thoughts of suicide or death

Depression in Teens

Your teen's behavior will change if they are depressed. Here are some changes in behavior to watch for. Your teen may:

- Eat more or less than normal
- Sleep more or less than usual
- Pay less attention to their hygiene or appearance
- Think or speak about suicide or death
- Self-harm
- Act in an aggressive way
- Use alcohol or other drugs
- Be agitated or restless
- Complain of stomachaches, headaches or other pains that can't be explained
- Miss a lot of school or struggle in school
- Isolate from friends and family

What Can You Do?

If your teen is struggling, here are some ways you can help:

- Talk with your teen's healthcare provider about medicine and psychotherapy. Both can help.
- Look for mental health resources at your teen's school, local mental health center, social service agency or hospital.
- Let your teen know that they will not feel this way forever.
- Offer your love and support.
- If your teen talks about death or suicide, seek help right away.

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