



CARING MINISTRIES CORNER



Teen Depression

Teen depression is a serious mental health problem that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest in activities. It affects how your teenager thinks, feels and behaves, 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 changing bodies 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.

What's normal and what's not

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 your teen. Try to determine whether he or she seems capable of managing challenging feelings, or if life seems overwhelming.

When to see a doctor

If depression signs and symptoms continue, begin to interfere in your teen's life, or cause you to have concerns about suicide or your teen's safety, talk to a doctor or a mental health professional trained to work with adolescents. Your teen's family doctor or pediatrician is a good place to start. Or your teen's school may recommend someone.

Depression symptoms likely won't get better on their own — and they may get worse or lead to other problems if untreated. Depressed teenagers may be at risk of suicide, even if signs and symptoms don't appear to be severe.

If you're a teen and you think you may be depressed — or you have a friend who may be depressed — don't wait to get help. Talk to a health care provider such as your doctor or school nurse. Share your concerns with a parent, a close friend, a spiritual leader, a teacher or someone else you trust.

(edited by Dawn Preisler from an article by Mayo Clinic)

