

What is Depression?

Depression is the feeling of extreme sadness and a loss of interest in things that once brought joy. This feeling interferes with daily functions (e.g., hygiene, going to school, hanging out with friends, etc.). Depression is a serious mental health concern. Knowing the signs of depression in children and where to get help are the first things you can do.

References

1. American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.).
2. Adapted from: <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-depression-5090284>

for more information

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How to spot

Depression in children



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What to look for₁:

- Low energy or fatigue
- Not sleeping or sleeping too much
- Not wanting to eat or eating too much
- Poor concentration or not being able to focus
- Your child is saying that they feel hopeless
- Low self-esteem

How to help your child if they express any symptoms of depression:₂

Have a conversation

Actively listen to what your child is telling you. Refrain from expressing any type of judgement or stating your opinion. Ask open ended questions. Some examples of how you can talk with your child about their feelings are shared below:

Validate their emotions

Children are capable of feeling deep emotions. Even if you do not understand, let them know that what they feel is valid and you are here for them.

Talk to your pediatrician

Your pediatrician will be able to provide you with more specific information to help your child. They may also be able to refer you to a therapist.

Practice mindfulness

Practice keeping your child's focus on what is happening at that moment. Call attention to what is around them and focusing their senses on what is around them.

STARTING A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR CHILD:

- What is your body feeling right now?
- I care about you. I want you to know I am here to listen to what you have to say.
- I have noticed that you are not playing with your friends as often. Is everything okay?
- How are you feeling? What can I do to help you?