



TIPS AND TRICKS FOR UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING DEPRESSION

What Is Childhood Depression?

- Sad mood, feelings of worthlessness, irritability, and/or loss of pleasure or happiness that lingers for a long time, is persistent, and occurs more days than not.
- It interferes with an individual's normal, day-to-day functioning. It affects approximately 5% of children and adolescents.
- Children under stress, who experience loss, or who have attentional, learning, conduct or anxiety disorders are at a higher risk for depression. Depression also tends to run in families.

Symptoms Of Depression:

- Frequent sadness, tearfulness, crying
- Decreased interest in activities or inability to enjoy previously favored activities
- Hopelessness
- Persistent boredom; low energy
- Withdrawal; social isolation, poor communication
- Low self-esteem and guilt
- Extreme sensitivity to rejection or failure
- Increased irritability, anger, or hostility
- Difficulty with relationships
- Frequent complaints of physical illnesses, such as headaches and stomachaches
- Frequent absences from school or poor performance in school
- Poor concentration
- A major change in eating and/or sleeping patterns
- Thoughts or expressions of suicide or self destructive behavior

Tips For Managing Your Child's Depressive Symptoms:

- Talk to your child to see how she/he is feeling.
- Seek professional help.
- Take active steps to build your child's self-esteem, confidence, independence, and self-reliance.
- Encourage your child to engage in activities he/she typically enjoys.
- Teach your child how to use positive self-talk. People with depression often focus on the negative. Help your child shift his/her attitude and focus to the positive.
- Encourage your child to journal or draw about his/her feelings and thoughts.
- Help your child get exercise.
- Encourage and assist your child in obtaining a sense of connection at school and with his/her peers.
- If your child is depressed, talk with him or her about how to use his or her peers, extended family and other important people for support.

Resources:

- National Alliance on Mental Illness – www.nami.org
- National Institute of Mental Health - www.nimh.nih.gov
- *The Depressed Child: A Parent's Guide for Rescuing Kids* by Douglas Riley
- *Mind Over Mood: Change How You Feel by Changing the Way You Think* by Dennis Greenberger & Christine Padesky