

Presentation
Courtesy of TEEN CONTACT
www.teencontact.org
(972) 233-TEEN

Topic: Depression

Title: What you need to know about depression

For: Parents or Teachers of elementary, middle, and high school students

Length of Time Needed: 30-45 minutes

Objectives:

1. To define depression
2. To inform parents or teachers of contributing factors of depression
3. To inform parents or teacher of signs and symptoms of depression
4. To inform parents or teachers of when to seek professional help

Material Needed:

1. overhead projector/screen/overheads or handouts

Activity:

1. **What is depression?** Ask the group of parents or teachers to respond to this comment verbally after dividing them into groups. Have them discuss within their groups their answers. After several minutes, have the groups share their definitions. Share the definition below on an overhead with participants and discuss.

Definition:

Depression is a disorder that affects your thoughts, moods, feelings, behavior, and physical health. Though some have thought it was “all in your head”, doctors now know that depression is not simply a weakness, and you cannot treat it on your own. It IS a medical disorder with a chemical or biological basis.

2. **What causes depression?** Ask the group of parents or teachers to share what they think contributes to depression. With an overhead, present the following causes of depression allowing discussion for each one.

What causes depression?

There is no single cause for depression. Here are factors that contribute to depression.

1. Heredity: Though genetic links have been identified, not everyone with a family history of depression will develop the disorder.
 2. Stress: Stressful life events may trigger the onset of depression. Such events may include a loss of a loved one, loss of a job, divorce, etc.
 3. Medications: Long-term use of certain medications may cause symptoms of depression in some people.
 4. Illness: Individuals suffering from a chronic illness such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, or Alzheimer's are at a higher risk for developing depression.
 5. Personality: Certain personality traits (low self-esteem, overly dependent on others, self-critical, pessimistic, or easily overwhelmed by stress) can make you more likely to develop depression.
 6. Alcohol, nicotine, or drugs: Studies have shown that using these substances may actually contribute to depression.
 7. Diet: Low levels of folic acid and vitamin B-12 may also cause symptoms of depression.
- 3. What are the signs and symptoms of depression?** Ask the group of parents or teachers to discuss this in their groups and come up with what they believe are signs and symptoms of depression. With a transparency, share the following lists with the parents and teachers. Allow time for discussion.

TWO HALLMARKS OF DEPRESSION

1. Loss of interest in normal daily activities
2. Depressed mood (feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and helplessness)

Other signs and symptoms (must be present most of the day, nearly every day for at least 2 weeks)

1. Sleep disturbances
2. Impaired thinking or concentration
3. Significant weight loss or gain
4. Agitation or slowing of body movements
5. Fatigue
6. Low self-esteem
7. Thoughts of death

- 4. When should one seek help for depression?** Ask the group of parents or teachers to share opinions of when they believe one should seek help. With a transparency, share the following information with the parents or teachers. Allow time for discussion.

If you notice your child or student feels sad, helpless, tired, or worthless; if his or her eating and sleeping habits have changed greatly, and if he or she shows

little interest in once enjoyable activities, encourage him or her to seek professional help to see if depression is the cause.

Evaluation:

Orally ask the following questions before the presentation and after the presentation.

1. What is depression?
2. What are the causes of depression?
3. What are the signs or symptoms of depression?
4. When should one seek treatment for depression?

Resources:

www.mayoclinic.com

Original material prepared by:

Kelli Hoekzema

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What is depression?

Definition:

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What causes depression?

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2. **Stress:** Stressful life events may trigger the onset of depression. Such events may include a loss of a loved one, loss of a job, divorce, etc.
3. **Medications:** Long-term use of certain medications may cause symptoms of depression in some people.
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6. **Alcohol, nicotine, or drugs:** Studies have shown that using these substances may actually contribute to depression.
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What are the signs and symptoms of depression?

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When should one seek help for depression?

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