

# DEPRESSION

Irritability is a core symptom of depression in children.

## IMPORTANT FACTS

- 2% of children suffer from depression.
- 4% of adolescents suffer from depression.
- Depression is closely associated with suicidal thoughts and behavior; it is imperative to evaluate for symptoms routinely at pediatric visits.
- Comorbidity diagnosis are also common with depression.

## WAYS TO SUPPORT

### Active Listening

- Being quiet and listening to the person talking.
- Let the person who spoke confirm that you have understood what they are saying.
- Invite the person to tell their story.
- Use open ended questions to follow up.

### Nonverbal Communication

Match nonverbal language with the intent of your verbal language.

- Facial expressions, gestures, touch and position.
- Vertical and horizontal distance and physical barriers.
- Voice tone, rhythm, volume and emphasis.
- Flushing, blanching, swallowing and tearing up.

### Empathy

- Strive to understand where a person is coming from.
- Listen with full attention.
- Check with the person for understanding.
- Summarize what has been told to you reflecting the feelings and the facts.
- Elicit and accept corrections.
- Continue until it is confirmed that the person feels understood.

### Tools

- Cognitive behavioral therapy.
- Interpersonal psychotherapy.
- Medication (i.e. SSRI's).

## COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Depressed mood — most of the day for most days. <sup>1</sup>
- Decreased interest — diminished pleasure in all or almost all activities most of the day nearly every day. <sup>1</sup>
- Significant weight changes — significant weight gain (more than 5% of body weight increase in one month) or weight loss without dieting. <sup>1</sup>
- Insomnia or hypersomnia — nearly every day. <sup>1</sup>
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation — observable by others, not just subjective. <sup>1</sup>
- Fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day. <sup>1</sup>
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt — maybe delusional, nearly every day. <sup>1</sup>
- Concentration problems — diminished ability to think or concentrate, or indecisiveness nearly every day. <sup>1</sup>
- Thoughts of death or suicide — recurrent suicidal ideation without a specific plan; or a suicide attempt or specific plan for committing suicide. <sup>1</sup>

## RESOURCES TO HELP

- 988oklahoma.com
- [aacap.org/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Facts\\_for\\_Families/FFF-Guide/The-Depressed-Child-004.aspx](https://aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/The-Depressed-Child-004.aspx)
- [nami.org/your-journey/kids-teens-and-young-adults](https://nami.org/your-journey/kids-teens-and-young-adults)
- [childmind.org/topics/depression-mood-disorders](https://childmind.org/topics/depression-mood-disorders)
- [nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/teen-dperession](https://nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/teen-dperession)

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## REFERENCES

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2. American Psychiatric Association (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.)*. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>
3. Son, S. E., & Kirchner, J. T. (2000). *Depression in children and adolescents*. *American Family Physician*, 62(10), 2297-2308. Retrieved from <https://www.aafp.org/pubs/afp/issues/2000/1115/p2297.html>