

Depression Checklist for Teens

Teens with depression tend to withdraw from their families and friends, staying in their bedrooms or other private area for hours at a time. Depression can make them feel tired and irritable, and they just want to be left alone.

The following are indications that a teenager may be experiencing depression:

Memory Loss and Confusion

A depressed teen may find themselves forgetting homework or test dates, or getting confused about times and dates. A teen that was previously successful in school may be unable to remember assignments and tests. Depression can also make a teen feel confused; they may be unable to make decisions or focus on a question long enough to answer it.

Lack of Motivation

Depression takes a teen's sense of motivation away. They may not seem to care about their upcoming final exams, or about getting into college, or anything else that other teens are concerned about (or that he or she used to be concerned about). Poor grades may not seem to matter.

Eating Problems

A teen who overeats or under-eats may be depressed. Watch out for sudden weight gain or loss in your teen.

Tiredness

Depression can make a teen want to sleep all the time during the day, but it often robs them of sleep at night. Your teen may become excessively tired, and consequently without the energy to interact socially or otherwise engage in activities.

Feelings of Hopelessness and Worthlessness

Does your teen talk about feeling worthless? Do his (or her) comments indicate he dislikes himself or some aspect of himself? Does he approach life as a defeated person? Listen carefully for details in your teen's speech and reactions to life.

Feeling Overwhelmed

If your teen overreacts when "one more thing" gets added to their plate of things to do, they may be depressed. Depression makes teens feel totally overwhelmed, so when your teen finds out that they have a quiz at school or a friend is taking a long vacation, they may break down, unable to handle one more thing.

It's worth pointing out that teen depression, like all depression, should be taken seriously. It is not something you can just shake off and get over. It's tempting to blow off such symptoms as teen moodiness, but to ignore these symptoms could do much more harm than good.