

Signs of Depression & Suicidal Intent

S I G N S O F D E P R E S S I O N

Teenagers face an array of pressures as they transition into adulthood, from changes associated with puberty, figuring out who they are as an individual, and questions about where they fit in at school and in social circles. This can make it difficult for family and friends to differentiate between a young person struggling with depression versus the typical moodiness of a teenager. When trying to determine if an adolescent is struggling with depression, consider the severity of their symptoms, how long the symptoms have occurred, and how different from their typical self the person has been acting. Some of the symptoms may include:

- ★ Irritability, restlessness
- ★ Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” feelings
- ★ Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- ★ Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- ★ Increased sensitivity or vulnerability to criticism
- ★ Fatigue and decreased energy
- ★ Changes in sleeping habits
- ★ Overeating, or appetite loss
- ★ Withdrawal and loss of interest in activities once pleasurable
- ★ Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
- ★ Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- ★ Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment

If you or someone you care about is suffering one or more of these signs, speak up immediately, even if you are unsure that depression is the issue. Regardless of whether depression is the issue, the symptoms need to be addressed. Attempt to open a dialogue with the individual and discuss what he or she is going through. If that fails, seek out the assistance of a trained professional.

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SIGNS OF SUICIDAL INTENT

The following may be signs of suicidal intent and should be taken seriously:

TALK

If a person talks about:

- Killing themselves
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain

BEHAVIOR

A person's suicide risk is greater if a behavior is new or has increased, especially if it's related to a painful event, loss, or change.

- Use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting recklessly
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression

MOOD

People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Loss of interest
- Rage
- Irritability
- Humiliation
- Anxiety