

# DEPRESSION HELPSHEET FOR PARENTS

Depression isn't about the level of happiness, it's about the loss of hope. But it isn't always easy to differentiate between depression and normal teenage moodiness. It can be tempting to minimize or to feel overwhelmed because we don't know how to "fix it", but depression often gets worse when ignored. Our teens need us to start the conversation and walk with them toward hope and healing.

## NOTICE THIS:

It seems like there's a dark cloud over your teen that remains, even when circumstances change.



### WATCH FOR THIS

Feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness persisting beyond two weeks and spreading over multiple areas of life, causing the teen to step away from the things that formerly brought them joy.

Nothing in the past or future really matters beyond the present pain.

A collection of symptoms such as apathy, avoidance, shame, heightened irritability, isolation, deep sadness or fatigue, deep despair, impaired memory, recurring complaints of physical pains (like headaches or stomach aches) and difficulty thinking clearly or making decisions.

Symptoms of depression will likely not disappear on their own and may put the teen at risk of alcohol or drug abuse, self-harm or suicide if left unacknowledged.



### SAY THIS

"What you are feeling right now is not all that there is. Time passes and life changes. Hold on."

"I'm not going to try and talk you out of this, but I want you to know that something may feel like it's true without actually being true. Can I tell you some things that are actually true about you and your future?"

"I would love to give you a break from these heavy feelings. How about if we do something different together so your mind can have a break."

"There are people who know a lot about depression that can give us some support. Will you let me connect you with a counselor or a support person who can help?"



### TRY THIS

Because depression is complicated, relief often comes from an intentional combination of interventions. There's no singular, quick fix.

Treatment brings relief to 80% of youth, but teens don't often realize they are experiencing depression or know how to access support. We need to connect them, beginning with a visit to the doctor.

Rhythms are essential to healing. As a family, choose regular bedtimes, be intentional with gratitude, engage with community, and adopt healthy eating and daily exercise. Develop a plan together for when hopelessness overwhelms.

Text "connect" to 686868 (Kids Help Phone) for support 24 hours a day. Seek support for yourself, not just your youth.



### RESOURCES

To access all of our helpsheets online, visit [youthunlimited.com/teentools](http://youthunlimited.com/teentools)

Credit to: [lifeteams.ca](http://lifeteams.ca)

### Remember:

"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strength you and help you."

(Isaiah 41:10)