Depression in Kids & Teens

Pay Attention To Social Interactions

When your child has playdates, is their behavior changed? For example, has your child suddenly become withdrawn and aloof? Or has your child become more aggressive with their friends? Another example could be if your child has dropped their interest in seeing friends altogether?

Pay Attention To Changes In Sleep, Eating, or Energy

If your child has noticeable changes in their sleep patterns, eating habits, or energy levels, it could be a sign of depression. A day or two of poor sleep or no appetite is no cause for alarm. However, if these changes are routine and lasting, it could be a sign of depression. Look for noticeable changes in your child’s energy levels, as they could be a sign of depression.

Pay Attention To Changes In Thoughts, Feelings, or Behavior

Depression can be characterized by changes in thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. Changes in thoughts could include negative self-talk, such as lowering of self-esteem. For example, your child may start thinking negatively about themselves, such as “I’m not good enough” or “I’m unlovable.” Changes in feelings could include sadness, anger, or boredom. For example, your child may start frequently experiencing sadness or anger, or appear to feel flat or uninterested in their usual activities.

Pay Attention To Changes In School Performance

Depression can also affect a child’s school performance. For example, your child may start experiencing difficulty with homework or schoolwork, or may struggle with completing assignments. They may also show a decrease in grades.

What Do I Do If It Is Depression?

If you think that your child or teenager is experiencing depression, there are steps you can take.

1. **Talk to Your Child:** It’s important to talk to your child about their feelings and concerns. Let them know that it’s okay to feel this way, and that you’re there to support them. Encourage open and honest communication.

2. **Seek Help:** If you suspect that your child may be experiencing depression, don’t hesitate to seek professional help. A mental health professional can provide diagnosis and treatment options.

3. **Support Your Child:** It’s important to provide emotional support to your child. Listen to them, offer encouragement, and be there for them. Encourage them to participate in activities they enjoy and to spend time with friends and family.

Featured Resources

- **Therapy & Treatment Services:** The Center for Effective Therapy offers individual and group therapy, medication management, and other interventions to help children and teens overcome depression.

- **Therapeutic Summer Camp:** CAMP BAKER provides a therapeutic environment for children and teens to engage in activities and receive support for their mental health.

- **Special Education:** MANVILLE SCHOOL offers special education services to support the learning needs of children with depression.

- **College Preparation:** NEXT STEP helps children and teens prepare for college, including the college application process and financial aid.

Need More Help?

Resources at The Baker Center are just a click away! A mild case could turn more severe as they get older. If you think your child may be too young to be formally diagnosed with depression, it never hurts to do a check-in! A mild case could turn more severe as they get older. If you think your child may be too young to be formally diagnosed with depression, it never hurts to do a check-in!