



Virtual Parent Night 2/3

Teen Depression...how to start the conversation

Normal “Teen Angst” vs Clinical Anxiety and Depression

Teen Angst is a normal, developmental stage in which teens or pre-teens work to establish their own unique personality and gain independence from the family unit. It’s helpful to remember that adolescence is a time of great change, strong emotions, a drive for independence, social anxiety and the belief that “everyone is looking at me.”

Teen Angst can include the following signs:

- Irritability and/or moodiness
- Pessimism and negativity
- Withdrawal from the family activities
- Changes in friendships or peer groups
- Dressing differently or seeking new interests that emphasize independence
- Increased need for alone time

Signs That You Need To Be Concerned About Your Child

Mental Health professionals are seeing an uptick in Adolescent Anxiety and Depression during COVID19. Here are some signs that may point to something more concerning than normal “Teen Angst”

- Unusual mood changes that can include helplessness, hopelessness, more extreme irritability, rage, more frequent conflicts with family or friends, pronounced sadness, crying, or weepiness
- More extreme changes in behavior like self-isolation, personality changes (example: going from a socially outgoing kid to complete withdrawal), showing little interest in long-term friendships, etc
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Sleep disturbances. Sleeping too much or not sleeping well at all
- Restlessness or agitation; extreme low energy; inability to engage in normal routines
- Extreme changes in eating patterns; weight gain or loss
- Problems with memory or concentration
- Loss of interest/change in academic effort, activities that normally bring joy or important relationships
- Lack of basic hygiene; physical aches and pains
- Thoughts about death or suicide; talking about suicide
- Self harming behavior
- Substance use or abuse

Intensity, Duration, Pervasiveness

It is important to consider the intensity, duration and pervasiveness of mood or behavior changes all together. They can help determine if a child needs professional intervention and support.

Intensity: What kinds of thoughts or behaviors are you seeing in your child? Are they mild or more intense? Do they come and go, or are they constant? Do they interfere with home life, school or friendships? Are they severe enough to keep your student from getting out of bed or addressing personal hygiene? Do they result in self-harming behaviors or suicidal thoughts?

Duration: How long do the concerning moods last? Do they come and go, and are they connected with life events? Are they longer lasting with few or no breaks in the distressing signs? Anything lasting longer than two weeks is cause for concern and should be evaluated.

Pervasiveness: Is your child able to be happy or upbeat for friends, at school or in other environments or situations? Or, does your child's mood and behavior present in all aspects of life like home, school, with friends and with personal self-esteem. If your child seems unable to control concerning moods at will, especially when you know they normally would, this can be a red flag as well.

What Can You Do As a Parent?

- Make it ok to talk about feelings and what is bothering your child
- Promote health - healthy diet, exercise, enough sleep, positive connections
- Help develop coping skills - talking, journaling, music, art, volunteering, physical activities
- Look at problems from a different way
- Focus on the strengths of your child

What Can You Do As a Parent?

- Consistent schedule
- Routine - daily, weekly
 - Predictable rituals
 - Meals
 - Parent/child check-in
- Private space
- School space
- Family night
- Ask questions and hear the answers
- Limit screen use during quality time
- Calm, peaceful times to recharge

Community resources when you need more help

Crisis Resources

- **Diversus Health Lighthouse Walk-in Crisis Center**
 - 115 S.Parkside Dr Colorado Springs, CO 80910
 - Phone (719) 635-7000; Crisis HotLine: 1 (844) 493-8255
 - Open 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year
- **Cedar Springs Behavioral Health Services**
 - 2135 Southgate Rd, Colorado Springs, CO 80906
 - Phone: (719) 633-4114
- **Peak View Behavioral Health**
 - 7353 Sisters Grove, Colorado Springs, CO 80923
 - Phone : 1(888)235-9475
- **Safe2Tell**
 - Open 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year
 - Phone 1(877) 542-7233 [1(877) 542-SAFE]

Community Resources cont

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Colorado Springs
 - 510 E Willamette Ave, Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3029
 - Ph No.: (719) 473-8477; Email Address; info@namicos.org
 - Website: <http://www.namicoloradosprings.org>

- Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us>

Helpful Articles

[Is It Teen Angst or Depression?](#)

[Parents Guide to Teen Depression](#)

[Checking Your Teenager's Mood During COVID 19 Pandemic](#)

[Signs Your Teen May Need More Support](#)

[Helping Children Cope with Changes Resulting From COVID-19](#)