

Understanding Youth Depression

Presented By:

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Our Mission:
A world where every young person benefits from mental health support

Our Services:
Online counseling, designed for teens

Learning Objectives

- Learn about the prevalence and impact of depression
- Identifying signs and symptoms of depression
- Learning ways to support your child
- Connecting to available resources
- Q&A



Safe Space Guidelines

A Message To You

Take Care of Yourself & Each Other

Today's topic can be a difficult one to discuss. We recognize that this discussion may bring up strong emotional reactions. Feel free to step away at any time.

Reach Out for Help

While our conversation today will be guided by a licensed clinician, this class is not intended as diagnosis or treatment of depression. Please reach out if you need further help or information.

Know There is Hope

Our conversation today will focus on the prevalence and impacts of youth depression today, while also covering information, strategies, and tools we can all use to be part of the solution.

Depression: Signs & Symptoms

Mental Health Statistics



37%

of high school students reported experiencing **poor mental health** during the pandemic ¹



44%

of high school students reported they felt **persistently sad** or **hopeless** during the past year ¹



22%

22% of high school students seriously considered **attempting suicide** during the past year ²

Emotions

- Emotions are an **expected reaction** to situations, people, or thoughts – *emotions can be messengers for what we need*
- Emotions usually do not impact **life functioning**
- They are a **temporary** feeling state such as the “blues” or feeling “stress”
- Emotions are only **one symptom** of mental illness

Depressive Disorders

- A **mental disorder** impacts quality of life and functioning
- Symptoms can impact our **energy, motivation** and general enjoyment of life
- A **persistent** mood state – Cannot “*snap out of it*”, can last for **weeks, months** or **longer**

Depressive Symptoms & Behaviors

Common signs and symptoms of depression may include:

- Changes in **moods**—sadness, anger, numbness, irritability
- **Loss of enjoyment or interest** in activities: low motivation, procrastination, isolation
- **Self-harm** or **substance use**
- Changes in **appetite, sleeping habits**
- Difficulty maintaining daily routines, **hygiene** practices
- Not turning in homework, **declining grades** homework
- Fatigue, **difficulty concentrating**
- **Low self esteem**, negative thoughts, feelings of worthlessness
- **Verbal statements** or hopelessness, helplessness, wanting to die

Risk Factors

Risk Factors are circumstances and experiences which may elevate a person's risk for a condition/circumstance. These are not causes, and many people who experience risk factors may not develop a depressive disorder

Biological Factors

- Health/physical factors, such as illness or bodily trauma
- Genes/family history
- Brain chemistry

External factors

- Seasons, big life events, transitions
- Substance abuse
- Trauma, including *Adverse Childhood Experiences* (ACEs) – abuse, violence, neglect, etc.

There is no one cause for depression; many factors that contribute to depressive episodes. A **combination** of different environmental and genetic factors most commonly lead to mental health challenges

Common Stressors

Stressors are events, situations, individuals, comments, or anything we interpret as negative or threatening; stress is our resistance to an emotion or situation

- Expectations, workload, grades, etc.
- Learning impulsivity control, disruptive behaviors
- Relationship difficulties: bullying, conflict with friends, family, or partners
- Transitions and big changes, traumatic events
- Feeling misunderstood or unheard by others
- Circumstances beyond the child's control (*parentified or caregiving roles, language barriers, lack of space/privacy*)

We all experience stressors, and there are some things that are out of our control. Being aware of these and trying to support children through stressful events or situations can help them to cope and build resilience.

How to Support Your Child

How Parents Can Help

- **Check-in** on a regular basis, **stay connected**, and **encourage** youth to tell you about their problems. When they do, truly listen.
- Express **compassion** and remind your child *often* that you love them and that you are there to **support** them no matter what
- Your child may feel ashamed or guilty for feeling depressed. Remind them they're not alone, they're not a burden, and that **reaching out for help is a sign of strength**
 - You may not understand why they feel the way they do – that's okay. They may not either. Sometimes there's no "reason" behind feelings of depression
 - Let them know it's okay to feel their feelings, and that you are there for them. When they're ready, you can work on solutions together.

How Parents Can Help with Depression

Encourage them to be active. Try to help them do a couple of small things each day that they enjoy – it can help them feel better afterwards, even if they have low motivation

Offer assistance with things that might be tough – like hygiene or getting outside. Build routines to help – like brushing your teeth together, or going for a short walk after dinner.

- Start small! The first step is always the hardest

Bring in a sense of hope. Sometimes it can be hard to remember that these feelings are temporary. Help your child remember that these feelings will pass. Maybe they have felt this way before, and it didn't last forever.

- Ask them what has helped them when they've felt this way in the past, and build a list of coping skills they can use to try to feel better.

Coping with Self-Harm

Self-harm is what we call an “unhelpful” coping skill. Maybe physical pain distracts them from emotional pain, or maybe pain helps combat a feeling of numbness. Ask them how it makes them feel, and find safer [alternatives for self-harm](#) and risk taking:

- Listen to music/blast music
- Release emotions through crying, screaming into a pillow/out loud
- Spend time with a pet/take for a walk
- Talk to a loved one
- Write/journal
- Cover a piece of paper with scribbles; draw what’s making you upset + rip it up
- Substitute different sensations: snap a rubber band on your wrist
- Use cold/hot sensations: hold or rub an ice cube, hot or cold shower
- Draw on yourself where you want to cut
- Prioritize safety: remove weapons or drugs in the house, have emergency resources (988), stay with them if they’re high risk

Questions to Ask

Do I have depression?



- Do you often feel sad, anxious, worthless, or even “empty”?



- Have you lost interest in activities you used to enjoy?
- Do you get easily frustrated, irritable, or angry?



- Do you find yourself withdrawing from friends and family?



- Are your grades dropping?



- Have your eating or sleeping habits changed?
- Have you experienced any fatigue or memory loss?



- Have you thought about suicide or harming yourself?

Depression looks different for everyone. You might have many of the symptoms listed above or just a few.

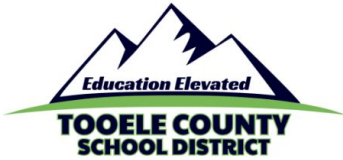
Talking to Your Child about Getting Help

- Ask them direct questions. “Are you feeling depressed, or thinking about hurting yourself?” vs. a leading question such as “You’re not thinking of hurting yourself, are you?” – if it feels hard for you to talk about, just imagine how hard it might feel for your teen.
- Remind them that mental health issues are common, and can happen to anyone. Talk about emotions and have check-ins with them often, and keep conversations between you and your child private
- Let them know they are in control – in therapy they can share what they want, they can stop whenever they want, and what they share in therapy is private
- Normalize mental health through sharing other people’s experiences– your own/family history if appropriate, [celebrities](#), important role models
- Bring in *hope* and the idea that they could be feeling better in just a few weeks or months with the right coping skills and support

When to Seek Help

- **You know your child best.** Talk to child about your concerns, especially when you notice *changes* in their behavior.
- **Access resources.** Talk to your child's healthcare professional or school supports if you have concerns about the way your child behaves at home, in school, or with friends.
Treatment options can include a check-up with pediatrician, individual or family therapy, school counseling, support groups, medication
- **Early diagnosis & treatment.** Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment can be very impactful, though treatment can be effective at any point.

Resources



Resources

If you are interested in getting a referral to Daybreak counseling for your child, please contact your school counselor for more information.

To find more resources for families in the Tooele CSD Community, please visit:

www.tooeleschools.org/families/family-resources

You can find more community resources using this link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/19EEj9eTn365mbZ5FHa0ZOsezeY4VOclrCtIcAdzQxew/edit?usp=sharing>

Feedback Survey

Please take a moment to complete this feedback survey.

You can use this [link](#) or scan the QR Code below



Thank You!

CONTACT

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