

Parent Resource Toolkit



What do we do?

Our Mission

A Brighter Day unites depression and stress resources with teenagers and young adults.

We do this by promoting mental health education through our website and community-building events.



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OUR STORY

Resources

If you need help, please reach out now.

IMMEDIATE SERVICES

Immediate Emergency Services

Call 911

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Call 988

Immediate Mental Health Resources and Essential Services

Call 211

TEXT HOTLINES

Alameda County

Text "SAFE" to 20121

Contra Costa County

Text "HOPE" to 20121

Crisis Text Line

Text "HOME" to 741741

National Alliance of Mental Illness

Text "NAMI" to 741741

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Text "START" to 88788

San Francisco Suicide Prevention

Text (415) 200-2920

The Trevor Project (LGBTQ+)

Text "START" to 678-678

Veterans Crisis Line

Text 838255

CRISIS SUPPORT HOTLINES

Alameda County

Call 1-(800)-309-2131

Contra Costa County

Call 1-(800)-833-2900

National Alliance of Mental Illness

Call 1-(800)-950-6264

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Call 1-(800)-799-7233

City of San Francisco

Call 1-(415)-781-0500

The Trevor Project (LGBTQ+)

Call 1-(866)-488-7386

Veterans Crisis Line

Call 1-(800)-902-5437

ONLINE CHAT HOTLINES

National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI)

<https://www.nami.org/help>

Veterans Crisis Line

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat/>

The Trevor Project (LGBTQ+)

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat>

What is Depression?



Depression is one of the most common mental disorders in the United States.

It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working.

Current research suggests that depression is caused by a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors.

While depression can happen at any age, it is now recognized as occurring in children and adolescents. Many chronic mood and anxiety disorders in adults begin as high levels of anxiety as children.

Causes of Depression

Depression is a complex mental illness. No one knows exactly what causes it, but it can happen for a variety of reasons. Some reasons include, but are not limited to:

- **Brain chemistry.** Neurotransmitters are naturally occurring brain chemicals that carry signals to other parts of your brain and body. When these chemicals are abnormal or impaired, the function of nerve receptors and nerve systems changes, leading to depression.
- **Hormones.** Changes in the body's balance of hormones may be involved in causing or triggering depression.
- **Inherited traits.** Depression is more common in people whose blood relatives also have the condition, such as a parent or grandparent.
- **Early childhood trauma.** Traumatic events during childhood, such as physical or emotional abuse, or loss of a parent, may cause changes in the brain that increase the risk of depression.
- **Learned patterns of negative thinking.** Teen depression may be linked to learning to feel helpless, rather than learning to feel capable of finding solutions for life's challenges.

Risk Factors for Teen Depression

Many factors increase the risk of developing or triggering teen depression, including:

- Having issues that negatively impact self-esteem, such as obesity, peer problems, long-term bullying or academic problems
- Having been the victim or witness of violence, such as physical or sexual abuse
- Having other mental health conditions, such as bipolar disorder, an anxiety disorder, a personality disorder, anorexia or bulimia
- Having a learning disability or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Having ongoing pain or a chronic physical illness such as cancer, diabetes or asthma
- Having certain personality traits, such as low self-esteem or being overly dependent, self-critical or pessimistic
- Abusing alcohol, nicotine or other drugs
- Being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender in an unsupportive environment
- Having a parent, grandparent or other blood relative with depression, bipolar disorder or alcohol use problems
- Having a family member who died by suicide
- Having a family with major communication and relationship problems
- Having experienced recent stressful life events, such as parental divorce, parental military service or the death of a loved one

Treatment and Therapies

Depression, even the most severe cases, can be treated. The earlier that treatment can begin, the more effective it is.

Depression is usually treated with psychotherapy, medication, or a combination of the two.

- Some forms of treatment include: psychotherapy (commonly known as “talk therapy”), medication, exercise therapy, light therapy, and brain stimulation therapies



Signs and Symptoms of Depression

Symptoms of Depression:

- Aches, pains, headaches, or cramps that won't go away
- Crankiness or irritability
- Decreased energy
- Digestive problems that don't get better, even with treatment
- Fatigue
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and helplessness
- Loss of interest in things once pleasurable, including sex
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or sleeping too much
- Overeating, or appetite loss
- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" feelings
- Pessimism and hopelessness
- Restlessness
- Suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts
- Trouble concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions

Signs of Depression:

- Always talking or thinking about death
- A sudden switch from sadness to extreme calmness, or appearing to be happy
- Deep sadness, loss of interest, trouble sleeping and eating (that gets worse over time)
- Making comments about being hopeless, helpless, or worthless
- Saying things like "It would be better if I weren't here" or "I want out"
- Taking risks that could lead to death, such as driving through red lights
- Talking or thinking about suicide



Eight Ways to Help Someone with Depression

1. Provide Support

Your support and understanding can help your loved one during their time of need.

What you can do:

- Be willing to listen. Listen carefully and avoid giving advice, opinions, and making judgements. Listening to them and being understanding can be a powerful healing tool.
- Make plans together. Offer your time to your loved one; join them on a walk, see a movie together, and share an enjoyable experience with them. Do not force them person into doing something they do not feel comfortable with.
- Offer assistance. Your loved one may not be able to complete tasks like they once did. Give suggestions about actions you would be willing to do and locate helpful organizations that they may benefit from.
- Provide love and positivity. People with depression may criticize themselves and find fault with everything they do. Remind them of their positive qualities and how much they mean to you.

2. Learn the Symptoms of Depression

Because no two people are affected the same way by depression, symptoms may range from mild to severe. These symptoms can cause little to extreme problems in day-to-day activities such as school, work, social activities, relationships with others, and relationship with themselves. Please refer to Page 7 for a list of signs and symptoms.

3. Encourage Treatment

People with depression may not recognize that they are depressed and think that their feelings are normal. Some individuals feel ashamed about their depression and believe they should be able to overcome it without the support of others or treatment. But depression rarely gets better without treatment and may worsen.

How you can help:

- Talk to the person about what you have observed and why you are concerned.
- Explain that depression is not a personal flaw or weakness.
- Suggest seeking help from a mental health professional. Consider a medical doctor or a mental health provider such as a licensed psychologist or therapist.
- Express your willingness to help by offering to help schedule appointments, going along with them to sessions, and spending time with them when they need company.

4. Identifying Warning Signs of Worsening Depression

Everyone experiences depression differently. Learn how depression affects your loved one and what to do when it gets worse. Worsening depression should be treated as soon as possible. Encourage them to partner with their medical team to create a plan for when symptoms progress.

5. Understand Suicide Risk

Those who have depression are at an increased risk for suicide. If your loved one is severely depressed, there may be possibility that they may feel suicidal. If necessary, take action.

- **Seek help.** Contact the person's doctor, mental health provider, or other health care professional.
- **Call a suicide hotline number.** The National Suicide Prevention Line can be reached at 1-(800)-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) to talk to a trained counselor.
- **Make sure the person is in a safe environment.** If possible, eliminate things that could be used to perform self-harm or suicide.
- **Call 911 or your local emergency number** if they are in danger of self-harm or suicide.

6. Stay Alert for Warning Signs of Suicide

Learn and stay alert for common warning signs of suicide or suicidal thoughts. Some examples may include, but are not limited to:

- **Talking about suicide** — for example, making statements such as "I'm going to kill myself," "I wish I were dead," or "I wish I hadn't been born"
- **Withdrawing** from social contact and wanting to be left alone
- **Feeling trapped** or hopeless about a situation
- **Doing risky or self-destructive things**, such as using drugs or driving recklessly
- **Giving away belongings** or getting affairs in order when there's no other logical explanation for why this is being done
- **Saying goodbye** to people as if they won't be seen again

7. Take Care of Yourself

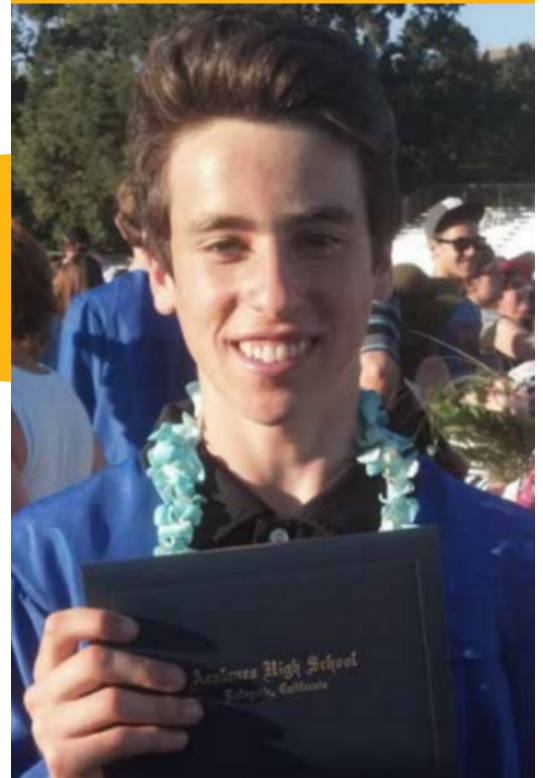
Supporting someone with depression is not simple or easy. Ask others for help and take steps to avoid burning out or becoming frustrated. It can be easy to give yourself to others during a difficult time like this, set aside time for hobbies, exercise, and connecting with others.

8. Be Patient

While depression symptoms improve with treatment, it can take time. Finding the best treatment for the individual may require trying more than one type of treatment approach or medication. For some people, symptoms improve quickly after starting treatment. For others, it will take longer.

In Memory of Jake Kallen

Every year, tens of thousands of teenagers struggle with depression, suicidal thoughts, deep sadness, isolation, stress, and the feeling of helplessness.



This Parent Resource Toolkit was created to help educate parental figures about depression and share resources to find help for someone struggling with their mental health.

From my family to yours, I thank you for being part of A Brighter Day.

Elliot Kallen, Founder

