

TIPS FOR PARENTS: WHEN YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD IS *DEPRESSED*

Look for Warning Signs

Depressive Symptoms

- Looking sad and dejected; irregular patterns of mood (ups and downs)
- Decline in motivation and grades at school; refusal to go to school
- Diminished interest in everyday activities; social withdrawal
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits; lethargy
- Self-doubt, self-blame, feelings of helplessness, feelings of hopelessness

Related Symptoms: Acting Out

- Disruptive and oppositional behavior; excessive anger
- Risky behavior (including any indications of substance use, self-injury, promiscuity)

Related Symptoms: Anxiety

- Excessive worry
- Panic attacks
- Biting finger nails; wetting bed

Related Symptoms: Attention

- Difficulty concentrating
- Disorganization
- Impulsivity

What You Should Do

Communicate With Your Child

- Be present; listen; be empathic
- Necessity that parents intervene if symptoms are acute and/or chronic
- Don't be afraid to discuss the possibility of the "unthinkable" (self-injury, suicide)

Address Stressors in the Environment

- Unhealthy family dynamics (e.g., parental discord, divorce, economic stress on family)
- Difficult peer relations (e.g., peer pressure, lack of friends, bullying)
- Difficult sibling relations
- Academic pressure
- Risks in the community (e.g., drug use, violence)

When Necessary, Get Professional Help

- From your child's pediatrician
- From a psychologist

Richard S. Newman, Ph.D.
21243 Ventura Blvd. Suite #209; Woodland Hills, CA 91364
(818) 518-4962
DrNewman@DrRSNewman.com • www.DrRSNewman.com