

IS IT TEEN MOODINESS OR DEPRESSION?

Adolescence can be a challenging time for teens, during which they may seem more sensitive or overreactive than usual.

Here are some tips for differentiating normal teen moodiness from depression.



Fast fact

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among teenagers.

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CREATING A HEALTHIER KENTUCKY

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Warning signs

Here's what is normal and what is not when it comes to teen behavior:

Normal: Shifts in mood that seem out of proportion to the triggering incident.

Concern for depression: A persistent negative mood or persistent irritability.

Normal: Strong reactions to seemingly minor incidents.

Concern for depression: Explosive behavior that is verbally or physically aggressive.

Normal: Decreased interest in socializing with family.

Concern for depression: Decreased interest in socializing with peers.

Normal: Sleeping late on weekends and being tired on school mornings.

Concern for depression: Sleeping all the time and/or refusing to get out of bed.

Normal: Lower-than-normal grades when transitioning to middle or high school or a lower-than-normal grade in one class.

Concern for depression: A sudden decline in grades.

Normal: Changes in taste for certain foods.

Concern for depression: Changes in eating patterns.

Normal: Changes in preferred activities.

Concern for depression: Decreased interest in activities that were previously enjoyed without becoming interested in other activities.

If you, your child, or someone you know are thinking about suicide or self-harm, call or text 988, the National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.

How you can help

- 1. Seek professional guidance.** If you recognize signs of depression in your teen, schedule an appointment with their doctor. Treatment options can include therapy, medication or a combination of both.
- 2. Actively listen.** Talk with your teen every day and minimize distractions. Allow them to express themselves openly and honestly, and let them know they can come to you when they are struggling.
- 3. Encourage healthy habits.** Make sure your teen is getting enough exercise and is eating nutritious, balanced meals.
- 4. Combat isolation.** Though your teen may feel like being alone, encourage them to spend time with family and friends.