

## Tips for parents of depressed teenagers cont...

Sometimes it can be extremely difficult to connect with your child but try to persist as depressed teens do not want to feel crowded or under more pressure to engage. It may also be the case that the teen does not want to worry or upset their parents anymore, so keep their true feelings to themselves.

When your teenager talks to you about how they are feeling, respond by actively listening to them and abstaining from trivialising how they are feeling. Do not judge or lecture them and be careful not to use flippant remarks such as "Pull yourself together"

Identify situations that are causing tension in the house and involve everyone in a family discussion to find ways to reduce or eliminate them.

Talk to your teenager to see what is causing them stress outside of the home and work with them to make an action plan of ways to reduce their stress levels.

Discuss with your teenager what activities they feel reduce their stress level and encourage them to partake in them when they need to/more often.

Encourage your teenager to join clubs and to take up new hobbies in order to reduce the chance of them becoming isolated and also enabling them to meet new people and build new friendships that can act as an added support.

Encourage your teen to get at least eight hours sleep and to maintain a healthy diet.

Self-esteem and confidence can be affected by depression. Praise your child accomplishments and be sensitive when addressing things they could change.

Seek professional help if the adolescent's depressed feelings do not pass with time.

Remember that teenage depression is commonly treated with therapy or maybe therapy and medication and that help is out there.

**SOSAD Ireland** is a charity based in Drogheda, Dundalk, Navan, Cavan and Carrickmacross with 5 main goals;

- To raise awareness of suicide in Ireland.
- To break the stigma surrounding suicide.
- To provide support and direction to those feeling depressed and/or suicidal.
- To provide support and direction to those who may know someone feeling suicidal.
- To provide support and direction for those bereaved by suicide.

SOSAD Ireland provides a range of supports to anyone who may be affected or concerned about suicide or depression. SOSAD have trained volunteers on call for emergencies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for anyone who may be in distress and in need of professional help and support. We carry out suicide interventions, psychological assessments and offer free counselling to anyone who needs it.

SOSAD also has a range of supports available for anyone who has lost a loved one to suicide. Every volunteer in SOSAD is committed to providing the very best possible care and support to every client and we also do all we can to help their families cope through this difficult time.

supported by 

*Don't try to cope alone.*



**sosad**  
Save our Sons and Daughters

## Information on Teenage Depression

[www.sosadireland.ie](http://www.sosadireland.ie)

### RESOURCES – *all confidential*

SOSAD Drogheda	041 9848754
SOSAD Navan	046 9031855
SOSAD Dundalk	042 9327311
SOSAD Cavan	049 4326339
SOSAD Carrickmacross	042 9668992

## Introduction

The teenage years can be both an exciting and challenging. Teenagers are faced with unique challenges in the transition from childhood to adulthood which can mean it becoming a difficult and confusing time. It is usual for these years to bring ups and downs but when the hard times outlast the good times it may be a sign of teenage depression. Teenage depression can affect many aspects of a teenager's day to day life including how they feel, think and act but it is important to remember that there is help out there.

### Signs and Symptoms indicating teenage depression

#### *How it can make you feel*

- Do you feel sad and hopeless?
- Do you feel anxious and on edge?
- Do you have trouble concentrating and remembering things?
- Do you feel angry a lot of the time?
- Do you feel lacking in energy and motivation?
- Do you feel like you are lacking in confidence?
- Do you feel hurt when people criticise you?
- Do you feel sick often (Headaches, backaches, stomach problems etc.) with no apparent cause?
- Have you been feeling guilty, that you are one to blame for everything that goes wrong in your life, that you are worthless?
- Have you been thinking of death recently?

#### *How it may be affecting your life*

- Do you find yourself crying a lot but for no particular reason?
- Have you started missing school or college?
- Have your academic results started to drop?
- Do you feel yourself pulling away from your friends and family and isolating yourself?

- Have you been self-harming?
- Do you find yourself sleeping too much or too little?
- Have you noticed that you either gained or lost weight recently?
- Have you lost interest in interests and activities that you used to enjoy?

### *Tips for teenagers*

- **TALK!** Share the way you are feeling with people you trust. They can support you through this difficult time rather than you trying to deal with everything alone.
- If exams or particular subjects seem overwhelming talk to a teacher as they can help you with study or extra tutoring.
- If you are worried about a health issue or a possible pregnancy talk to your doctor.
- Surround yourself with positive influences. Spend time with people who make you feel good to be around.
- Avoid or remove yourself from people who have a negative influence whether it be peer pressure or taking drugs and alcohol.
- If you are being bullied, confide in someone you trust, whether it be a favourite teacher, your parents or a school counsellor or anyone else you get on well with.
- If are you self-harming remember there are people out there that want to help. Talk to your doctor or ring SOSAD. Take action now.
- Exercise, get out for a walk, go for a run, play sport. Do whatever you enjoy just make sure you get out in the fresh air.

*There is always hope.*

- It is important to continue with interests and hobbies that you enjoy. If there is a hobby you have always wanted to do but haven't before, get involved.
- If you have a pet, look after their care, spend time with them every day. Having something to look after and focus on will take attention away from negative thought processes.
- Make time every day to do something that you enjoy. It can be to read a good book, watch your favourite t.v. show or listen to your favourite band.
- Try to get at least eight hours sleep a night.
- Eat a balanced diet.
- If you are unsure of what in particular is causing you upset, keep a journal of your daily thoughts and look back over it to identify what issues keep coming up over and over again. Once you know, share these with a trusted adult who can work with you to help to reduce or eliminate what is causing you stress.

Remember that you are not alone and that depression can be controlled, reduced and over-come with professional help.

### *Tips for parents of depressed teenagers.*

If you suspect that your child is suffering from depression and much more than teenage 'moodiness' check out the symptoms listed in this booklet and talk to your teenager about how they are feeling and let them know that you will be there for them when they want to talk.

Ensure they know how much you care by telling them that you want to understand how they are feeling so that you can help to support them through this time.

*There is help out there.*