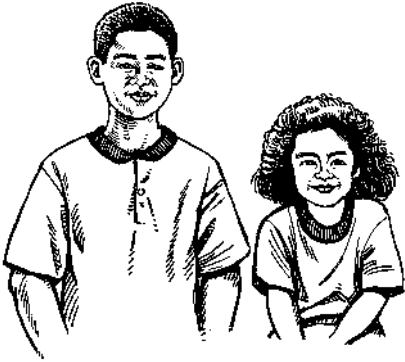


Common Signs of Depression in Children and Adolescents



■ BEHAVIOR CHANGES

Instead of looking sad, as adults do, children often become aggressive or prone to angry outbursts.

■ SLEEP CHANGES

Although an increase or decrease in sleep can occur with depression at any age, children and younger adolescents may sleep too much, refusing to get out of bed. Adults and older adolescents are more apt to have trouble sleeping.

■ APPETITE CHANGES

Although an increase or decrease in appetite can occur with depression at any age, older adolescents tend to lose weight, whereas children and younger adolescents may gain weight.

■ IRREGULAR BOWEL MOVEMENTS

Children old enough to control their bowels may withhold or have “accidents.”

■ PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

Children and adolescents may complain of stomachaches, headaches, and more. They may show signs of decreased energy or fatigue.

■ SCHOOL PROBLEMS

Children’s and adolescents’ interest or performance in school may take a nosedive. Ability to concentrate may be diminished. Grades may drop; discipline problems may start.

■ EXTENDED BAD REACTIONS TO CRISES

Children and adolescents usually adapt to changes such as a new school in several weeks. Adapting to a death or parental divorce may take a year.

■ LOSS OF INTEREST IN OLD PLEASURES

Activities that made children and adolescents happy may no longer do so.

■ CHANGE OF FRIENDS

Children and adolescents may withdraw socially or switch their allegiance to friends whom parents see as less desirable.

■ EXPRESSIONS OF HOPELESSNESS OR FEELINGS OF WORTHLESSNESS

■ RECURRENT THOUGHTS OF DEATH AND SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

Source: Adapted, with permission, from KidsPeace. 1999. *Common Signs of Depression in Kids*. Orefield, PA: KidsPeace.