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HOW TO NAVIGATE ADOLESCENT DEPRESSION

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SADNESS is only one aspect of depression. Depression is a range of mental health illnesses that can impair your capacity to function and are characterised by depressed, empty or irritated feelings.



The National Institute of Mental Health states that while emotional ups and downs are common, if they linger for two weeks or more and significantly interfere with your everyday life, it may be an indication of depression.

It's one of the most prevalent mental health conditions in the world. Although it can strike at any age, the signs frequently appear in adolescence or the first few years of adulthood.

It can have profound and pervasive consequences on your life.

Teenagers may experience depression differently. Adults often experience melancholy, while teens experience intense irritation more frequently.

It's also critical to understand how depressive episodes differ from typical mood swings and feelings.

Teenagers who experience depressive episodes often show the following signs: frequent sobbing or crying; increased irritability or hostility; feelings of hopelessness, low self-esteem or guilt; low energy, loss of interest or enjoyment in routine activities; persistent boredom; withdrawal from family and friends; difficulty concentrating or making decisions; poor academic performance; trouble sleeping; and problems with relationships or communicating,

Teens who are depressed may find it difficult to maintain a productive social and academic life. Improving present and future well-being requires addressing and treating depression.

Depressive illnesses seldom have a single underlying aetiology. Several variables interact to induce depression:

Genetics

As is true of affective disorders in general, research into family histories of significant depression points to a hereditary component.

Depression is influenced by brain chemicals including dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin. The connections, development and functionality of nerve cells may also have a significant impact. According to research titled "Brain structural modifications in depression: Psychoradiological evidence", many brain regions, such as the prefrontal cortex, amygdala and hippocampus, are also involved in depression.

Environmental depression is significantly correlated with a history of traumatic or unfavourable childhood events. These might be traumatic incidents, family deaths, or physical or sexual abuse.

Teenagers are more likely to experience depressive episodes due to a variety of additional risk factors for depression. Severe life stress, other mental health conditions such as anxiety, disparities based on income, race or gender, loss or bereavement experiences, family conflict, chronic disease, and substantial life transitions like relocating or parental divorce.

The potential influence on teenagers' mental health increases as they are exposed to additional risk factors. The demands of society, including those from friends, family, entertainment and the media, can make mental health disorders more likely for youth.

In growing teenagers, problems with body image, looks, gender identity and sexual identity are frequent and can worsen depression.

Depressive disorders and other mental health diseases have a disproportionately negative impact on young people, and particularly girls, from immigrant or poor families. This also applies to communities of colour.

These youths are more prone to have depressive symptoms due to the higher number of environmental risk factors they generally encounter, such as severe stress, poor dietary habits and a lack of stimulation.

Teens' high-risk behaviours, including excessive substance use, self-harm, unprotected sex and suicide attempts, are also linked to depression.

Diagnosis

It's crucial to take depression seriously if you or someone you know appears to be experiencing it. Getting assistance may make a huge impact.

You can better understand what you're going through and acquire coping mechanisms for troubling thoughts and feelings by speaking with a doctor or mental health expert. Medication may also be helpful on occasion.

Treatment

Always consult a mental health specialist to identify the best course of action because the therapy should be personalised for you and your symptoms. You ought to feel free to communicate any uncertainties or worries and to ask questions. Try not to become disheartened if you don't notice results right away; it can take some trial and error with various kinds of therapy or medicine.

How to assist a depressed adolescent

It's crucial to be understanding and open to a teenager's sentiments whether you're their parent, teacher, guardian or friend and suspect they may be depressed. Ask them to describe their feelings in a kind and non-judgemental manner.

Try to react in a way that shows you have listened and not by lecturing. Even though some children might be dismissive or reluctant to talk about their thoughts with you, making them aware that you care and are willing to assist them is a crucial first step.

You can also speak to a medical professional or therapist who is familiar with teen depression. If teens are included in the decision-making process, they may be more willing to get therapy.