



# MENTAL HEALTH FAST FACTS ABOUT DEPRESSION

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## WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

All children experience short periods of sadness, this is a normal reaction to events that are stressful, upsetting or difficult to come to terms with. However, when sadness dominates or interferes with their academic and social functioning – it is classified a depression. When depression reaches the point of becoming an illness, it needs treatment.

- Being moody and irritable – easily upset, ‘ratty’ or tearful.
- Becoming withdrawn – avoiding friends, family and regular activities.
- Feeling guilty or bad, being self-critical and self-blaming – hating oneself.
- Feeling unhappy, miserable and lonely a lot of the time.
- Feeling hopeless and wanting to die.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Not looking after personal appearance.
- Difficulty going to sleep or waking very early.
- Lack of energy.
- Frequent minor health problems such as headaches or stomachaches.

Depression is usually caused by a variety of factors that include biological, familial, and significant stress in the student’s life. The depressed student can be referred to a mental health specialist such as psychiatrists, psychologists, psychotherapists and social workers, all of whom are highly skilled in helping young people and their families.

## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT DEPRESSION

### **NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill)**

Colonial Place Three

2107 Wilson Blvd. - Suite 300, Arlington, VA

(703) 524-7600

(703) 524-9094 (fax)

NAMI HelpLine: 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) <http://www.nami.org>

### **National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association**

730 N. Franklin, Suite 501

Chicago, IL 60610

(312) 642-0049

<http://ndmda.org>