

## **THE DEPRESSED CHILD**

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- Not only adults become depressed
- Children and teenagers also may have depression, which is a treatable illness
- Depression is defined as an illness when the feelings of depression persist and interfere with a child or adolescent's ability to function
- Approximately 20% of children and adolescents in the general population suffer from depression at any given point in time
- Children and adolescents under stress, who experience loss, or who have attentional, learning, conduct or anxiety disorders are at a higher risk for depression – and depression runs in families
- The behaviors of a depressed child or adolescent may differ from the behaviors of the depressed adult

### ***Symptoms for Depression in Children and/or Adolescent's:***

1. Frequent sadness, tearfulness, crying
  2. Hopelessness
  3. Decreased interest in activities; or inability to enjoy previously favored activities
  4. Persistent boredom; low energy
  5. Social isolation, poor communications
  6. Low self-esteem and guilt
  7. Extreme sensitivity to rejection and/or failure
  8. Increased irritability, anger or hostility
  9. Difficulty with relationships
  10. Frequent complaints of physical illnesses such as headaches and stomachaches
  11. Frequent absences from school or poor performance in school
  12. Poor concentration
  13. A major change in eating and/or sleeping patterns
  14. Talk of or efforts to run away from home
  15. Thoughts of expressions of suicide or self-destructive behaviors
- Depression is the leading cause of failure in school and in life for young people with learning disabilities

- Depression has been demonstrated in many studies to be associated with and the possible cause of school failure, conduct disorders and delinquency, anorexia and bulimia, school phobia and panic attacks
- Recent studies have shown that 5% of adolescents between the age of 14 – 18 suffer from clinical depression or manic-depressive illness
- This means that there are over 1,000,000 American adolescents that are presently walking around with depression, but only 20% of these people are diagnosed and even fewer will receive treatment.
- The toll taken by depressive illness does not end with the teenage years; left untreated the illness can recur throughout life leading to broken families, disrupted careers and unfulfilled lives.
- Depression has been considered to be the major psychiatric disease of the 20<sup>th</sup> century affecting 8 million people in America. Adults with depression are 20 times more likely to die from accidents or suicide than adults without depressive illness.
- Depression in adolescents results in a higher risk of suicide. The suicide rate for adolescents has increased more than 200% over the last decade
- 7-14% of children will experience an episode of major depression before the age of 15
- 20-30% of adult bipolar patients report having their first episode before age 20
- Out of 100,000 adolescents, 2-3 thousand will have mood disorders and 10-14 of these will commit suicide and between 35 and 38 will make at least one attempt.
- An estimated 2,500 teenagers per year commit suicide in the United States, making it the leading cause of death after accidents and homicide.
- The essential features of depression are the same in children and adolescents as it is with adults, although children and adolescents may exhibit the symptoms differently.

- Unlike adults, children and adolescents may not have the vocabulary to accurately describe how they feel and, therefore, may express their problems through their behaviors.
- Biological and genetic factors that shape personality can make some people more at risk for major depression.
- If a family member has had some form of major depression, it means that other family members are at greater risk of having this disorder.

### **ADOLESCENT CHECKLIST FOR DEPRESSION**

- You feel sad a lot, and it doesn't go away.
- You feel guilty; you think that you're no good; you have no confidence
- You lose interest in ordinary pleasures like music, sports, friends, or having fun. Most of the time you'd rather be left alone.
- You feel restless or tired most of the time.
- You're a nonstop partier, constantly moving around.
- You get unrealistic ideas about the great things you're going to do ... things that you never really could do.
- Thoughts just go racing through your head.
- You think about death a lot, or thoughts about suicide pop into your head.
- You seem to take pleasure in extremely dangerous activities, like reckless and high-speed driving.
- *You checked either of the last two boxes:* Seek help immediately
- *You checked four boxes:* You are having a tough time and may be suffering from depression or manic depression. It is important that you tell an adult that you are having trouble and ask them to get you some help from a professional.
- *You checked three boxes:* You may want to talk with your parent(s) about the difficulty you are having before things get worse.
- *You checked on or two boxes:* Guess what, you're fine. Everyone has some problems.