

PARENTS! YOU'RE DOING A GREAT JOB.

DEPRESSION IN CHILDREN

Depression is a serious mood disorder that can impact children, adolescents, and adults. It can manifest as but is not limited to persistent sadness, losing interest in activities, feeling guilty, change in eating and sleeping habits, shame and guilt, disinterest in school for children, and increased social isolation. In children, depression may also show as mood irritability, aggression, increased conflict, and acting out behaviors with peers and family. Depression can also lead to trouble in concentration, social withdrawal, self-harming behavior, and recurring thoughts of death or suicide. Often children do not communicate their feelings and thoughts to adults as these thoughts and feelings are usually confusing and difficult to speak about.

HOW TO FOSTER CLOSENESS AND OPEN COMMUNICATION

As parents, some of the things we can incorporate into our regular routine to build a close relationship and encourage open communication with children are:

- Asking children about their feelings
- Making time to talk with them individually
- Being kind and non-judgmental of their friends
- Talk about bullying issues at school or in the neighborhood
- Doing fun things- playing together
- Encouraging them to speak about their experiences and their friends
- Listen attentively to what they are saying
- Validating and praising their effort to communicate and giving positive feedback
- Active engagement in their interests
- Avoiding judgment and criticism

READ TOGETHER

A simple and easy way of helping your child open up to you as a parent is to read a book together on common childhood experiences. This can help children feel empowered to bring up topics they may not have been comfortable discussing before. The following is a list of readings you may find helpful:

1. "Me and My Feelings" by NBCT Vanessa Green Allen, M. Ed.
2. "Help Your Dragon Deal with Anxiety" by Steve Herman
3. "My Mouth is a Volcano" by Julia Cook
4. "Listening to my Body" by Gab Garcia and Ying Hui Tan

In Compass Health Center's Child Program, we utilize evidence-based treatment modalities such as Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy to assist children in learning new skills to manage distress and other difficult emotions, build interpersonal skills, increase resilience, recognize negative thought patterns, and work through thoughts of self-harm and suicide. To refer a patient or schedule an intake, please call us or visit our website and submit an inquiry.

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