

DEPRESSION

INFORMATION SHEET

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

- Depression in children, is when a child feels really sad, or unhappy for a long period of time. It is not just the normal ups and downs that all kids experience; but **a steady feeling of sadness or hopelessness that can negatively affect school, relationships, and experiences.**
- It is important to know that if someone is experiencing depression, it is not a sign of weakness. They are not a bad kid, nor is something wrong with their family.
- Depression is a mental health problem and is common. In 2020, nearly 1 in 4 hospitalizations for children and youth between 5 to 24 were for mental health conditions, including depression.



SOME COMMON SIGNS OF DEPRESSION IN CHILDREN AND TEENS...

They may be more irritable, lose their temper more than usual, and cry more

Older children may have thoughts of harming themselves or dying by suicide

Avoid going to school or skip classes

Low mood and low energy, getting going for the day feels like a big effort

They may lose interest in things they used to enjoy (spending time with friends, playing a sport, etc.)

Changes in their eating habits (eating a lot more or a lot less)

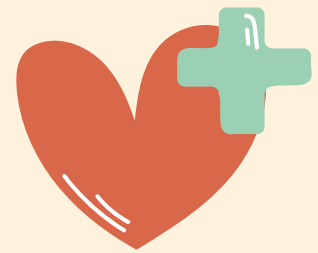


They may feel hopeless or worthless and have negative thoughts about themselves

Younger children may not know how to describe how they feel but may complain of more stomach aches, feeling very tired, or feeling sick

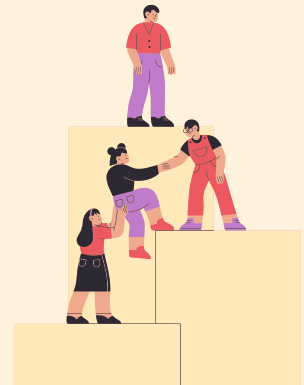
WHAT CAN I DO AND WHO CAN I TALK TO FOR SUPPORT?

If you think your child may be dealing with depression a good place to start is to **speak with your doctor or a doctor at your local Community Health Centre.**



Your child's doctor will ask specific questions about your child and may have you fill out questionnaires about their feelings and behaviour.

The answers to these questions will help the doctor determine **if your child could use support for managing depression.**



The doctor may suggest having your child talk to a therapist about how they are feeling or in some cases, they recommend that your child try a medication.

It is important to know that your doctor cannot share this information with anyone else without your permission. It will remain confidential – between you, your child and your doctor.

Dealing with depression and depressed feelings can feel lonely and scary for the person who has it and for the people that love them. With your love and patience and the right healthcare support, your child can enjoy their life again.

WHERE CAN I GO FOR INFORMATION?

- **George Hull Centre for Children and Families** | www.georgehullcentre.ca
 - A centre in the Etobicoke community that supports children, youth and their families around mental wellbeing. Translation services are available at the centre as well.
- **Lumenus Mental Health, Developmental & Community Services**
 - www.lumenus.ca
 - A centre in the Toronto area that provides supportive care to children and families focused on mental wellbeing, child development, autism and early years intervention services. Translation services are available at the centre as well.
- **About Kids Health website** | www.aboutkidshealth.ca
 - This website is put together by the Hospital for Sick Children and offers helpful information for parents, teens, and children. The information is also available in multiple languages.
- **Kids Help Phone website and phone support**
 - kidshelpphone.ca OR call (1-800-668-6868)
 - An excellent website that has information on children and youth's mental wellness. There are also sections of the website that have specific information for newcomers to Canada (kidshelpphone.ca/tag-cloud/?tags=newcomers). Another section of this website offers information in multiple languages (kidshelpphone.ca/wellness-support-in-multiple-languages). There are also counselors that speak multiple languages available to speak with children and youth over the phone.
- **New Youth** | <https://newyouth.ca/en>
 - An online community for immigrant and refugee youth new to Ontario. Offers information on dealing with depression and anxiety as well as many other topics.
- **Canadian Mental Health Association Newcomer's Health and Well-Being (for 12 years and older)**
 - <https://cmha-yr.on.ca/get-support/newcomers-health-and-well-being-12/>
 - A website that offers information to connect newcomers to support and programs for mental well-being

- **LAMP Community Health Centre** | <http://www.lampchc.org>
 - A multi-service centre that provides a wide range of health and community services and can refer to other local health services
 - <https://lampchc.org/programs-services/community-health-programs/ask-community-information/newcomer-services/>
 - ASK! Community Information offers a range of supports to newcomers through a Settlement Counselor
- **Stonegate Community Health Centre** | www.stonegatechc.org
- **Rexdale Community Health Centre** | www.rexdalechc.com

If your child is expressing thoughts of harming themselves or dying by suicide, it is important to get help right away.

- If your child is 16 years or older and you would prefer crisis support without the involvement of police, you can contact **the Toronto Community Crisis Service** by calling 211 or 911 or by contacting **the Gerstein Crisis Centre** at 416-929-5200.
- Go to the **nearest hospital with an emergency department** if your child is having thoughts of suicide with a plan to harm themselves (Etobicoke General Hospital Emergency and Urgent Care at 101 Humber College Blvd OR St. Joseph's Health Center at 30 the Queensway)

