



# Topic: Depression and Anxiety

## What We Need to Know

According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, depression is defined as an illness when the feelings of depression persist and interfere with a child or adolescent's ability to function. About 5 percent of children and adolescents in the general population suffer from depression at any given point in time. Children under stress, who experience loss, or who have learning, conduct or anxiety disorders are at a higher risk for depression. Depression also tends to run in families.

The behavior of depressed children and teenagers may differ from the behavior of depressed adults. Child and adolescent psychiatrists advise parents to be aware of signs of depression in their children, including frequent sadness, tearfulness, crying; decreased interest in activities; or inability to enjoy previously favorite activities, hopelessness; persistent boredom; low energy; low self esteem; extreme sensitivity to rejection or failure; increased irritability, anger, or hostility; frequent complaints of physical illnesses such as headaches and stomachaches; and frequent absences from school or poor performance in school.

## Conversation Starters

Why is it so hard for many people to talk about pain and painful situations?

Who can you turn to when you feel sad or depressed? How can we help you feel better?

Are there times when you feel that "everything is a competition?" Where is this pressure coming from?

## Resources

[American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry](http://www.aacap.org)