## The Face of Depression by Age

Depression doesn’t always look like you might expect. It can take on different appearances at different times in life. Here’s our guide to recognizing signs of depression at each life stage.

### Children

**Depression is not common in children.**

- **Triggers:**
  - Domestic violence, parental depression, other family stressors
  - Learning problems

- **Signs:**
  - Difficulties in school
  - Problems at school, home, with friends
  - Unusual levels of irritability and lashing out

- **How to Help:**
  - Talk to professionals:
    - Child’s primary care doctor
    - Family counselor
    - Teacher, school counselor
  - Have a talk in a low-pressure environment – on a walk or drive
  - Encourage teen to confide in others – teacher or friend
  - Make apt visit with primary care doctor

### Teens/Adolescents

**Some mood swings are part of normal behavior.**

- **Triggers:**
  - Difficulties in school
  - Pressure to perform
  - Rejection by peers
  - Lack of sleep

- **Signs:**
  - Mood changes longer than a few weeks
  - Problems at school or work
  - Withdrawal, hopelessness
  - Drug or alcohol abuse

- **How to Help:**
  - Prepare them for transition
  - Help build a support system
  - Stay connected
  - Get contact info for a good friend

### Young Adults

**This stage of life can be a trigger for depression.**

- **Triggers:**
  - Major life transition
  - Lack of support in new environment
  - Lack of coping skills

- **Signs:**
  - Mood changes longer than a few weeks
  - Problems at school or work
  - Withdrawal, hopelessness
  - Drug or alcohol abuse

- **How to Help:**
  - Listen to concerns
  - Suggest visit with primary care doctor
  - Encourage balance and self-care

### Adults

**Depression can strike at any age and is rising in baby boomers.**

- **Triggers:**
  - Lots of responsibilities – no relief
  - Social isolation

- **Signs:**
  - Mood changes longer than a few weeks
  - Problems at work, home, socially
  - Withdrawal, hopelessness
  - Drug or alcohol abuse

- **How to Help:**
  - Listen to concerns
  - Suggest visit with primary care doctor
  - Create ways to socialize

### Senior Adults

**Depression in seniors is often overlooked.**

- **Triggers:**
  - Social isolation
  - Major life losses
  - Physical illness
  - Medications

- **Signs:**
  - May be physical complaints, not sadness
  - Mood changes that don’t let up (grief fluctuates)
  - Problems in concentration

- **How to Help:**
  - Listen to concerns
  - Suggest visit with primary care doctor
  - Create ways to socialize

### All Ages

Seeing a primary care physician (PCP) can lessen the stigma of depression. PCPs now routinely screen for depression in office visits. Medications may be useful but are not always necessary. Many solutions are available.

**Created in partnership with**

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