

Depression

mindcheck.ca

and young people

Depression is becoming a problem when it starts to get in the way of everyday life and interferes with family and friend relationships.

sadness is common

Feeling sad or low from time to time is a part of life. Feelings of discouragement and frustration are normal reactions to loss or disappointments.

Normal sadness is usually mild and related to a life situation. A low mood or feelings of depression may cause poor sleep, not wanting to be with friends or family and not feeling hungry or eating too much.

A low mood generally will go away in a few days or a couple of weeks, especially if there is an improvement in the situation that started it. However, a persistent low mood could indicate the presence of depression. For symptoms, see *What to Look For*.

depression is treatable

The consequences of untreated depression can be serious. They include:

- Poor school performance
- Employment difficulties
- Loss of friends and family supports
- Substance abuse
- High risk for suicide

DID YOU KNOW?

- *Halle Berry, Elton John and Harrison Ford have experienced depression.*
- *Depression is not a barrier.*

Jane has been feeling unusually sad and miserable for the last few weeks. She is tired all the time and has trouble sleeping at night. Jane doesn't feel like eating and has lost weight. She can't keep her mind on her studies and her marks have dropped. She puts off making any decisions, and even day-to-day tasks seem too much for her. Her parents and friends are very concerned about her.

what to look for

Very often, the signs of depression are ignored, minimized or mistakenly seen as a typical part of growing up. A person experiencing depression may also put on a "smiling face" that fools others into thinking nothing is wrong.

Have any of these symptoms been bothering you in the last two weeks AND been interfering with your performance and enjoyment in a range of life areas?

Change in how you think and feel:

- Persistent feelings of unhappiness.
- Dark and gloomy themes, thoughts of death or suicide.
- Feeling numb or empty.
- Feeling bad, thinking that you are worthless or guilty, or being self-critical and self-blaming.
- Trouble concentrating or making decisions.
- Loss of motivation, or feeling anxious or uptight.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in one's activities.

Change in how you act and behave:

- Unusual weeping or continual despairing sadness.
- A decline in performance at school or work.
- Disruptive or aggressive behaviors or withdrawal from friends and activities.
- Uncharacteristic moodiness and irritability with family and friends.
- Difficulty sleeping or staying in bed all day long.
- Big changes in weight or appetite.
- Ongoing tiredness and lack of energy.

Learn more at mindcheck.ca.

mindcheck.ca

mindcheck.ca encourages the early detection and intervention of mental health and substance use issues in British Columbian teens and young adults.

 **fraserhealth**


BC MENTAL HEALTH
& SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority


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DID YOU KNOW?

- *Depression and anxiety are commonly found together.*
- *Depression and anxiety often occur in high school.*
- *Depression commonly appears with anorexia or bulimia.*
- *Depression can be associated with health conditions.*
- *Depression may resolve when the other existing condition is dealt with or treated successfully.*

depression and substance abuse

We all use substances, many of which affect our mood. It is common for young people experiencing depressive symptoms to self-medicate with the use of drugs or alcohol.

The person may not be aware that depression is present but recognize that they feel better in the short term when they use a substance.

- Alcohol can increase the level of depressive symptoms.
- Drugs like cocaine can change the body's ability to release dopamine effectively and depression can result.
- Depressive symptoms are common when people are in withdrawal from substance use.
- Symptoms can occur when a person stops using drugs or alcohol completely.
- Depending on the substance use history and the person's stress level, symptoms of depression are usually experienced during the post acute withdrawal period.

bipolar disorder

Bipolar disorder involves cycles of depression alternating with a "high" known as mania. We all experience shifts in our mood: days we feel happy, creative and energetic, and days filled with sadness and frustration.

However, if our mood becomes dramatic and extreme, where the mood state shifts through low and high periods, this can indicate the presence of bipolar disorder.

"This thing called 'adrenaline rush' comes on in stressful situations and then goes away, but in the hypomanic phase of a mood cycle, the rush does not go away. It's there when you're trying to close your eyes and sleep, but your thoughts are still going. You can't even sleep. The decreased need for sleep, more energy than usual, inflated self esteem, increased productivity and sharpened creative thinking is wonderful – until the mood shifts and changes into agitated, irritable, angry phase of mania."

what to look for

Mania is becoming a problem when these characteristics are experienced:

- Excessive energy, high elevated mood with rapid shifts of rage or sadness.
- Unreasonable, irritable or poor judgment.
- Extremely short attention span.
- Hyperactivity or racing thoughts, rapid or fast speech, talkative.
- Little need for sleep, becoming overly busy with grandiose plans.
- Impulsive or risky behaviour such as spending money freely or sexual indiscretions.
- Symptoms of psychosis with paranoid behaviour can occur.

The **depressive** phase of the cycle may bring some or all the symptoms of depression.

The **manic** phase of the cycle may bring excessive energy, racing thoughts, inflated self-esteem and uncharacteristically risky or ambitious behaviour.

DID YOU KNOW?

Robin Williams, Abe Lincoln and Winston Churchill have been affected by bipolar disorder.

depression and bipolar disorder are treatable

Depression and mood disorders can place a great burden on young people, their families and their friends. Visit mindcheck.ca if you think a problem might exist and to find out how to get help for yourself or others.

Check it out... Act now!

Information and resources: mindcheck.ca