



Parenting Is Prevention #8 What are the warning signs...

It just makes SENSE.

Kids' health is improved when families work together on these characteristics:

Sharing - Family shares responsibilities, including chores and decision-making.

Encouraging - Parents encourage supportive relationships with caring adults beyond the family and promote self-confidence and self-esteem.

Nurturing - Family members nurture each other and work to fulfill needs with unconditional love.

Supporting - Family members support each other in times of crisis and offer appropriate guidance and discipline.

Educating - Parents stress the value of education for kids and stay educated on mental health concerns.

...for depression?

- Frequent sadness, tearfulness and crying
- Low self-esteem and guilt
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sudden drop in school performance
- Increased irritability and anger
- Major changes in eating and/or sleeping habits
- Decreased interest in favorite activities

...for suicide?

- Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness
- Depressed mood
- Impulsive, risk-taking behavior
- Substance abuse
- Talk of or efforts to run away from home
- Frequent absences from school
- Purposeful self-injurious behavior
- Thoughts or expressions of suicide

MISSOULA FORUM  FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

435 Ryman * Missoula, MT 59802 * www.MissoulaForum.org



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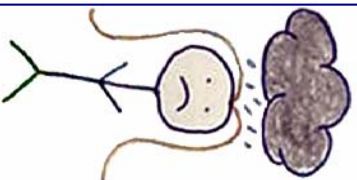
If you suspect your child is depressed or may be suicidal...

What should you know?

- Children DO experience clinical depression. As many as 1 in 33 children suffer from depression.
- Depression is more than occasionally having the blues; it's persistent and debilitating for people of any age.
- No one behavior alone can predict possible depression or suicide.

What should you say?

- Remind your children that you are there for them, and love them unconditionally.
- Assure your children that they can trust you, and remind them that it's OK to talk to another trusted adult.
- Remind them that it's not their fault.
- Let them know that you want to help in any way.
- Do not tell your child to 'snap out of it' - a depressed child needs love and understanding.



What should you do?

- Take careful notes of the behaviors that concern you. Note how long the behaviors have been going on, how often, and how severe they seem.
- Call and get advice from your doctor or a mental health professional.
- Talk to other families in your community.
- Get accurate information from libraries or online - the more you know, the more you can help.
- If you are faced with an emergency, don't wait, call 911.

If you suspect your child is in danger
from suicidal behavior, call 1-800-273-TALK .

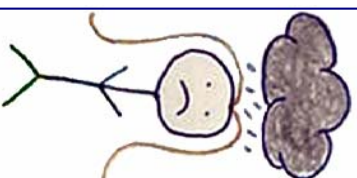
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