

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

DEPRESSION IN CHILDREN AND TEENS

October is Depression Awareness Month, a reminder that depression is a medical condition that can seriously impact a person's mental and physical health. Depression can also affect children and teens, although the illness often goes unrecognized and untreated. Even young children may demonstrate early warning signs such as persistent sadness and disruptive behavior.

In teens, depression can cause problems at school and home. Signs and symptoms of depression may include:

- Emotional changes such as sadness, hopelessness, frustration, irritability, loss of interest in usual activities, low self-esteem, trouble concentrating, social isolation, and conflicts with family and friends.
- Behavioral changes such as fatigue, use of alcohol or other drugs, agitation, sleeping problems such as insomnia or sleeping too much, changes in appetite, body aches and pains, angry outbursts and risky behavior, and self-harm.

Parents may find that it's difficult to tell the difference between teen depression and the mood changes that are part of the teen years. If depression signs and symptoms continue or interfere with the teen's quality of life, it's important to talk to a doctor or mental health professional. There are effective treatments for depression, including medication and therapy.

