



IS YOUR YOUTH EXPERIENCING ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION?

Anxiety and depression are among the most common mental health concerns in youth today. Over the last year, these concerns have been increasing for many young people. COVID-19 has caused anxiety about health, increased isolation, and made it challenging to connect with others. Due to changes with in-person contact or communication, there are young people who may be feeling alone, hopeless, and feel they have nobody to talk to. When this happens, many youths may try to hide what they are feeling or work through it on their own.

Symptoms for anxiety and depression can present physically, emotionally, and behaviorally, and some key signs of anxiety and depression can be easy to miss. While anxiety and depression can look similar, there are many signs to highlight that are unique to both anxiety and depression in youth.

Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression Alike

- Refusing to do things for fear of failure
- Lower grades
- Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much
- Changes in eating habits
- Not participating in school, extracurriculars, or previously enjoyed activities
- Acting out inappropriately
- Complaining about aches and pains when nothing is physically wrong

Anxiety Possible Signs and Symptoms

For Kids:

- Asking "what if?" questions frequently
- Avoiding trying new things
- Having meltdowns or tantrums
- Seeking approval constantly from parents and caregivers, and teachers
- Separation anxiety, or upset when away from loved ones

For Teens:

- Changing habits suddenly
- Getting overly upset when corrected
- Worrying about things in the distant future
- Having nightmares about losing loved ones
- Obsessing over upsetting thoughts or topics

Depression Possible Signs and Symptoms

For Kids:

- Talking about feeling sad or lonely, despite having friends.
- Spending most free time watching TV or laying on the couch or in bed when previously they had other interests
- Giving up or caring little about doing well in sports and school

For Teens:

- Participating in risky behaviors
- Showing irritability and anger
- Withdrawing from activities and isolating

How to Respond

If you spot these signs or symptoms in your youth, it is important to take it seriously and respond. A few things to consider:

- How long have the signs been there?
- How strong are the symptoms?
- How does it impact their day to day functioning?

Starting a conversation with your youth about what you are seeing can provide an opportunity to hear about what they feel. If you feel the signs are significant and your youth may need help outside of what you can do at home, it may be time to consider mental health services.

Touchstone's School Based Services offers mental health services for youth. For more information, please visit <https://www.touchstonehs.org/school-based-services/> or call Member Services at (602) 618-9815.

Sources:

<https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/managing-feelings/stress-anxiety/signs-your-teen-or-tween-is-struggling-with-anxiety>
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