

Understanding Depression

Depression makes activities and things that you used to enjoy feel less fun and meaningful, makes you feel less motivated, and have a hard time focusing.

Depression changes the way you think and what you do.

How does depression make you feel?

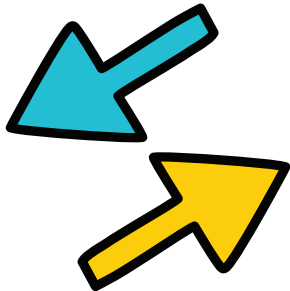
- ☐ Sad
- ☐ Angry
- ☐ Bored
- ☐ Tired

How does depression make you think?

- ☐ Only noticing the negative
- ☐ Saying mean things about yourself
- ☐ Telling you nothing matters
- ☐ Thinking you are a failure
- ☐ Nothing will ever get better

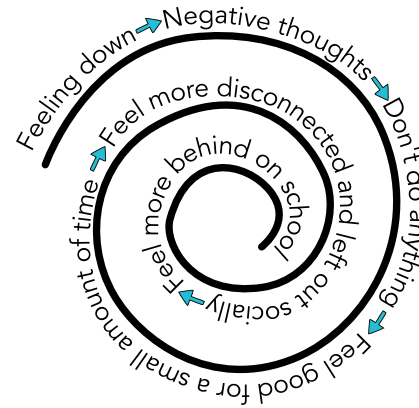
How does depression affect what you do?

- ☐ Spending less time with others
- ☐ Not doing fun things
- ☐ Not getting any work or chores done
- ☐ Not doing the things I used to enjoy



Helping Your Child Get Active Again

Depression can be driven by a downward spiral.



When your child feels down or angry, their thoughts focus on how bad they feel. Then, those feelings try to talk them out of doing things they care about. They end up doing less and feeling worse.

But they don't have to stay stuck!

- Find the balance between acknowledging your child's very real struggles with depression and taking action to get them unstuck.
- The more they do, the more energy they will have.
- To reverse the spiral of depression, you have to take action.
- Start planning small activities to increase motivation.
- The spiral can't be reversed by one or two activities. It will take ongoing effort over time.



Was this helpful?

Scan to take our short survey.

Moving Through Depression



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For more resources on children's mental health, visit:

KidsMentalHealthFoundation.org



Don't Wait!

We can't wait until we feel better to do things.

We all have different things in our lives that we value. Take a look below and circle what matters to you.

Connection: Spending quality time with friends, coaches, teachers or family members

Health: Caring for your body by doing physical activity, eating well, sleeping well, maintaining hygiene

Success: Doing well in school, getting good grades, making progress toward your future plans

Creativity: Expressing yourself through creative activities like art, music, or dance.

Other:

Try to do it at the same time every day or after another common activity (lunch, school, etc.).



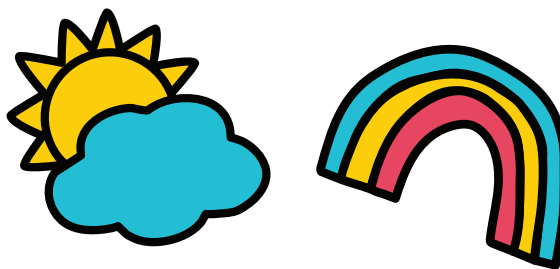
Myth

You need a reason to be depressed.



Truth

Depression can happen for many reasons, not just life circumstances or events.



Steps to Improve Your Mood

We know that doing things will help you feel better. Start small and build up over time. That can create an upward spiral to lift your mood.

Pick one area to get started.

Think of one small step you might take in this area. It could be something like:

1. **Connection:** Share something funny with a friend.
2. **Health:** Do 5 jumping jacks after school every day.
3. **Success:** Make a list of upcoming assignments and due dates.
4. **Creativity:** Draw, write or color for 1 minute every day.

What is the one small step you are going to try this week?

Try to do it at the same time every day or after another common activity (lunch, school, etc.).

Make it a habit! Keep coming back to the goal you chose.

Noticing and Talking Back to Depression

Noticing when your depression is talking and knowing how to respond is essential to living with depression. There are three steps to managing depressive thoughts.

1. **Catch it:** Notice your negative thought.
2. **Name it:** Label it as a negative thought.
3. **Talk back:** Challenge your negative thought.

Examples

Catch it	Name it	Talk back
"Nothing is going to get better"	"My depression is telling me nothing is going to get better"	"There are things I can do to help me feel better."
Track your own thoughts in the rows below.		