

## YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



# Looking After Youth Mental Health

## — Is My Teenager Depressed or Moody? —

As parents, our relationship with our children changes as they age. With those changes, parents often find themselves concerned for their pre-teens or teens. Parents find themselves wondering if their child is just being a “normal” teenager who can be moody, possibly irritable, even angry, or if it is something more such as depression. Parents may notice their teen isolating themselves and spending less time with family. It can be challenging to decide if your teen needs to be evaluated for depression and how to get them the help they may need. **The following are some key questions to help determine what is going on with your teen:**

- How long has my teen been behaving this way?
- Has there been a drop in school performance?
- Has their school attendance been affected?
- Have they lost interest in activities they once enjoyed?
- Have they been isolating themselves from family and friends?
- Has their appetite changed (eating more or eating less)?
- Has there been a change in their energy level?
- Do they complain about headaches or stomachaches?
- Are they having trouble concentrating or remembering things?
- Have they stopped caring about their appearance?
- Are they having trouble sleeping, are they sleeping too much?
- Are there any signs of self-harm such as scrapes or cuts?

If your teen is experiencing several of these symptoms, for 2 weeks or longer, it may be time to talk with them about seeking direction from a mental health professional. Having an open and honest conversation with your teen about their symptoms can open the door to understanding what they may be going through. Teenage years are often difficult for both the teen and parents to navigate. Developmentally, it is normal for teens to begin withdrawing from their parents as they seek to develop their identity, but they are still learning to manage their emotions and can become easily overwhelmed with life circumstances. Things that might not seem like a big deal to an adult can be catastrophic for a teen.

It is important that your teen knows they are safe to come to you with issues. Speak calmly and listening carefully. Avoid yelling, using sarcasm, or making personal attacks. Work together with your teen to develop a plan for addressing their concerns. Ask for and listen to their input. Remind your teen that they are not alone. If your teen is not receptive to having a discussion right away, don't lose hope.

Remember, that your EAP is here to help support you and your household members through life's ups and downs. You can contact your EAP at 800-327-4968 (800-EAP-4YOU), TTY: 877-492-7341 or visit [EAP4You.com](http://EAP4You.com) for more information and resources.