

Ten Top Tips[©]



When living with an unhappy teen

Here are ten tips that may help you see the warning signs of adolescent depression and self-harm!

1. **It is important to encourage** teenagers to talk about their problems and to be available and willing to listen when they do. Acknowledge that while your teenagers' problems may seem trivial to you, they are extremely important to them.
2. **If you feel your teenagers are unhappy**, ask them how they are feeling. Don't ignore their concerns. Let them know you are there for them, even if they don't want to talk at that moment.
3. **Be aware** that teenagers also suffer from stress. Help them learn appropriate ways of dealing with stress in their lives. If you don't feel able to provide this advice, then find out what's on offer in the school or your local community.
4. **Try not to focus** solely on your teenagers' achievements or what they aren't doing right. Let them know that they are cared for despite their mistakes and shortcomings. Praise them for whatever it is they do well.
5. **If your teenagers tell you they are feeling depressed** or stressed out, attempt to open up conversation by asking them to help you understand what's happening for them. Avoid offering advice like: "You'll get over it" or "We all have bad days, think about the good side of life". This only devalues their experience.
6. **Ask your teenager** how they would like you to help them or offer them the option of counselling.
7. **Attempt to ensure** that your teenagers have a good support network if they are feeling depressed. Ask them if they have friends they can talk to, or someone else they feel comfortable talking to. For example, a school chaplain or counsellor, a youth worker, an older brother or sister etc.
8. **If your teenagers talk about harming themselves** or attempting suicide, take it seriously. It is better to err on the side of caution than to let inaction result in tragedy.

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9. **If you are worried** about your teenager attempting suicide, look out for the following warning signs:
- Stressful events, like relationship break-ups, family conflict, loss, the death of someone close, school/job failure or problems etc.
 - Talking about suicide or 'not being around anymore'.
 - Making plans to 'leave', like giving away belongings and saying goodbye.
 - Withdrawing from family and friends.
 - Drop in performance at school or work or non-attendance.
 - Lethargy.
 - Increase in risk-taking behaviour.
 - Increase in alcohol or drug use.
 - Sudden mood changes.
 - Changes in sleep patterns.
 - State of calm, relief after a period of depression or anxiety.
10. **If your teenager's depression persists**, or your teenager is at risk or has attempted suicide, do not hesitate to seek help.

Call the following numbers for advice, support or counselling for you or your teenager:

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| Suicide Call Back Service | 1300 659 467 |
| Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Crisis Connect | 1800 048 636 |
| Crisis Care | 1800 199 008 |
| Mental Health Emergency Response Line | Metro 1300 555 788 Peel 1800 676 822 (all hours) |
| Ngala Parenting Line WA | 1800 111 546 |
| Kids Helpline | 1800 551 800 |
| Youthline | 9388 2500 |
| Youthlink | 1300 362 569 |
| Centrecare CY Counselling & Mediation (non-crisis) | 9325 6644 |

