



Monique Brown, MD, PC

Newsletter: December 2012

How do I know if my child is depressed?

Important News:

Office is closed daily for lunch from 12 noon - 1pm

Reminder: There is a no show fee for missed appointments

Contact office to update any and all contact information that has changed

Bring all necessary documents to appointments

Favorite Quote:
"Allow your Blessings to rain down"

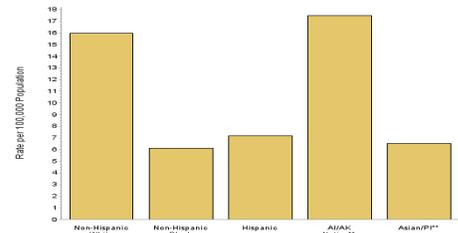
Depression in children and adolescents can look vastly different from that of an adult. You will need to look initially for changes in behaviors, moods, and interest levels. Often, children become more irritable. They may be more defiant. They may start to exhibit disruptive behaviors in school and at home. There may be a change in the sleep hygiene. They may start to be unable to initiate or maintain sleep. They may start to become more fatigued during the day. There may be a change in their eating habits. This may include a decreased or an increased appetite. Their grades in school may begin to decline. They may start to be more despondent and isolative at home. Pay particular attention to their desire to do things that they previously enjoyed doing. It is imperative that you note whether they seem more interested in death, give away things that they like, or seem to be consumed with thoughts of not being around.

If you are uncertain whether these symptoms exist in your child, it is very important that you have your child evaluated as soon as possible. We want to keep our children safe and healthy. Overall health includes mental health. Suicide

is a serious public health problem that can have lasting harmful effects on individuals, families, and communities. While its causes are complex and determined by multiple factors, the goal of suicide prevention is simple: Reduce factors that increase risk (i.e. risk factors) and increase factors that promote resilience (i.e. protective factors). Ideally, prevention addresses all levels of influence: individual, relationship, community, and societal. Effective prevention strategies are needed to promote awareness of suicide and encourage a commitment to social change.

Below are the rates for suicide from the CDC (Center for Disease Control) from 2009:

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Parenting Tips: The Importance of Consistency

Inconsistency can lead to a number of problems because of the messages it sends. Consider this example: a child begins to act silly at the dinner table one night. Because you are in a good mood, you laugh, perhaps even join in a bit. You see no harm in a little goofing off. The child gets the message that, not only is it okay to behave this way, but that it is a good way to get attention.

A few nights later, the child acts up again. This night, however, you are in no mood for it. You had a bad day at the office and are tired. You say harsh words, make threats, or perhaps punish the child. The other night you did it yourself, so the child doesn't think it is the behavior that is wrong. The child is now confused, perhaps feeling anger and resentment towards you. This can lead to rebellion. Rather than learning what is and is not acceptable behavior at the dinner table, your child has learned that you are unfair, and is still unclear on what constitutes proper behavior.

When parents are consistent from the start, children learn what they can expect from their parents. This helps in the bonding process. Consistency gives a child a sense of security. They learn they can rely on their parents and trust that their needs will be met. Consistency helps a child develop a sense of responsibility in that they know exactly what is required of them. Keeping regular routines with a child is also an important part of consistency. Finally, Consistency teaches children cause-and-effect relationships, which helps them as they grow with their ability to make wiser decisions.

If you have not been consistent with your child, it is never too late to begin. You may find it difficult when beginning to instill good habits and enforce rules. You will most likely be met with resistance that will test your own patience. In the long run, however, developing consistent routines, boundaries and consequences will benefit both you and your child.

Live~Laugh~Love

Kelli Byrd, MSW, LCSWA
Child and Adolescent Therapist