

WORKING WITH A LITTLE WHO HAS DEPRESSION



What is Depression?

Depression is one of the most common mental health disorders. Unlike the feeling of being sad or down that everyone gets occasionally, depression is a serious mental disorder that disrupts normal daily functioning. This common disorder affects one's ability to work, sleep, study, eat, and enjoy once pleasurable activities. These feelings are much more intense than just having the blues and can last for weeks, months, or even years. Depression can interfere with relationships, work, and daily activities, such as eating and getting dressed. This disorder does not usually go away on its own like the blues does. In some cases, depression occurs only once in a person's lifetime. However, it is more common for depression to be recurring throughout one's life.

What are the signs of Depression?

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" feelings
- Feeling hopeless or pessimistic
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and/or helplessness
- Irritability or restlessness
- Loss of interest/pleasure in usual activities
- Low self-worth
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits leading to too much or too little eating or sleeping
- Suicidal thoughts or preoccupation with death

Online Resources

- www.healthyplace.com
- <http://kidshealth.org>
- <http://www.keepkidshealthy.com>
- www.nami.org
- www.mayoclinic.com
- www.aacap.org

Tips for Bigs

- Gain an understanding of depression and how it affects your Little
- Be in good communication with your Little's parent/guardian regarding changes and concerns
- Don't blame your Little for feeling depressed
- Be flexible and patient with your Little
- Listen to your Little without being judgmental
- Help your Little build his or her self-esteem
- Work on helping your Little develop healthy coping skills
- Focus on your Little's strengths
- Always let your Match Support Specialist know of any changes and concerns you have
- Recognize how much of a difference you can make in your Little's life, while recognizing that your Little may also need professional help