

Depression

Quick Facts

Everyone feels sad or blue at times, but feelings of sadness that go on for weeks or months may be a mental health disorder called depression. Depression is more than just the “blues.” It affects a person’s thoughts, feelings, behavior, and body. Recent studies show that as many as 1 in every 33 children have depression.

Effects of depression

Depression can lead to school failure. It can also lead to alcohol or drug abuse. Perhaps the most frightening outcome of depression is suicide. Nationally, suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for 15–24 year olds and the 6th leading cause of death for 5–15 year olds.

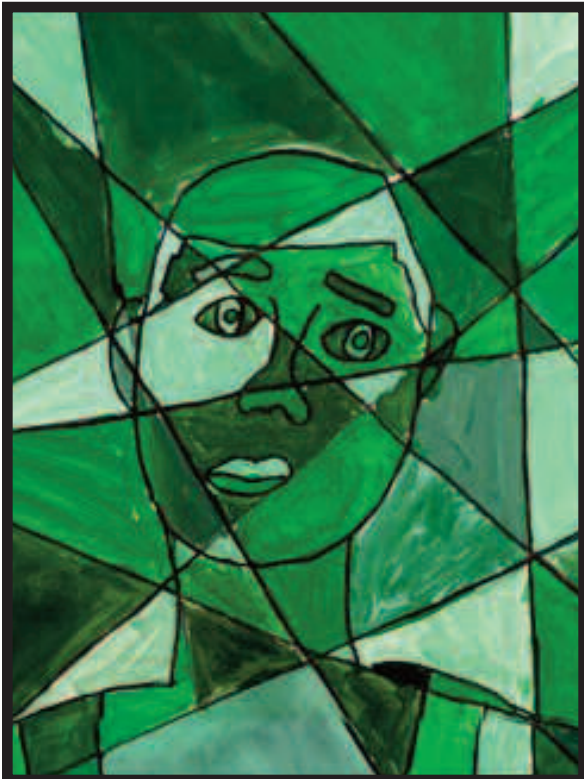
Treatment

Most people with depression can be helped with treatment. Many mental health care providers use “talk” treatments (psychotherapy) to help children and adolescents with depression. Medication is sometimes used also. The best treatment for each person depends on the nature and severity of the depression.

Take warnings seriously

In 8 out of 10 suicides, the person had said something or done something that could have been seen as a warning. Any child or teen who talks about suicide or dying, makes hints about not being around, or who attempts suicide should be taken very seriously and should receive immediate help from a mental health professional.

If you think you or someone you know may be experiencing depression, talk to a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult. Help is available—visit www.macmh.org for a list of disorder-specific resources.



Signs of depression often include:

- Sadness that won't go away
- Hopelessness
- Unexplained crying
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Persistent boredom
- Low energy
- Poor concentration
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Reckless behavior

Have an idea for a story, poem, painting, drawing, poster, or photograph that has to do with mental health? **Open•Up**, a literary and visual art magazine created by and for artists ages 5 -21, is now accepting submissions! Go to www.macmh.org/ for submission guidelines.

