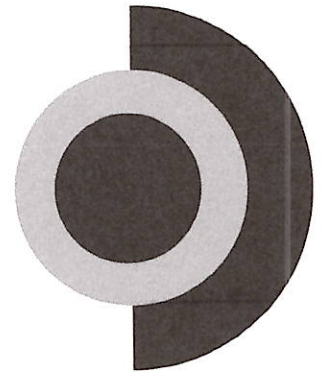


A BRIGHTER DAY
Uniting Depression and Stress Resources with Teenagers

Parent Resource Toolkit



What do we do?



Our Mission

Our mission is to be a relentless force in stopping teen suicide by providing educational resources on mental health and parenting. We accomplish this by hosting community events and virtual support groups, offering crisis intervention and therapy partnerships, and providing valuable information through our article center and website.

Our Vision

Our vision is to improve the lives of parents and teens struggling with mental health to ultimately create a world where teen suicide is no longer an epidemic in this country. We strive to strengthen the bond between parents and teens by providing the necessary resources, education, and emotional support to prevent and treat a mental health crisis.

A world where schools, communities, and families can talk about depression and suicide openly and honestly – a world where both parents and teens feel valued, accepted, and supported in times of mental crisis so they can live their lives to the fullest – that is our vision.

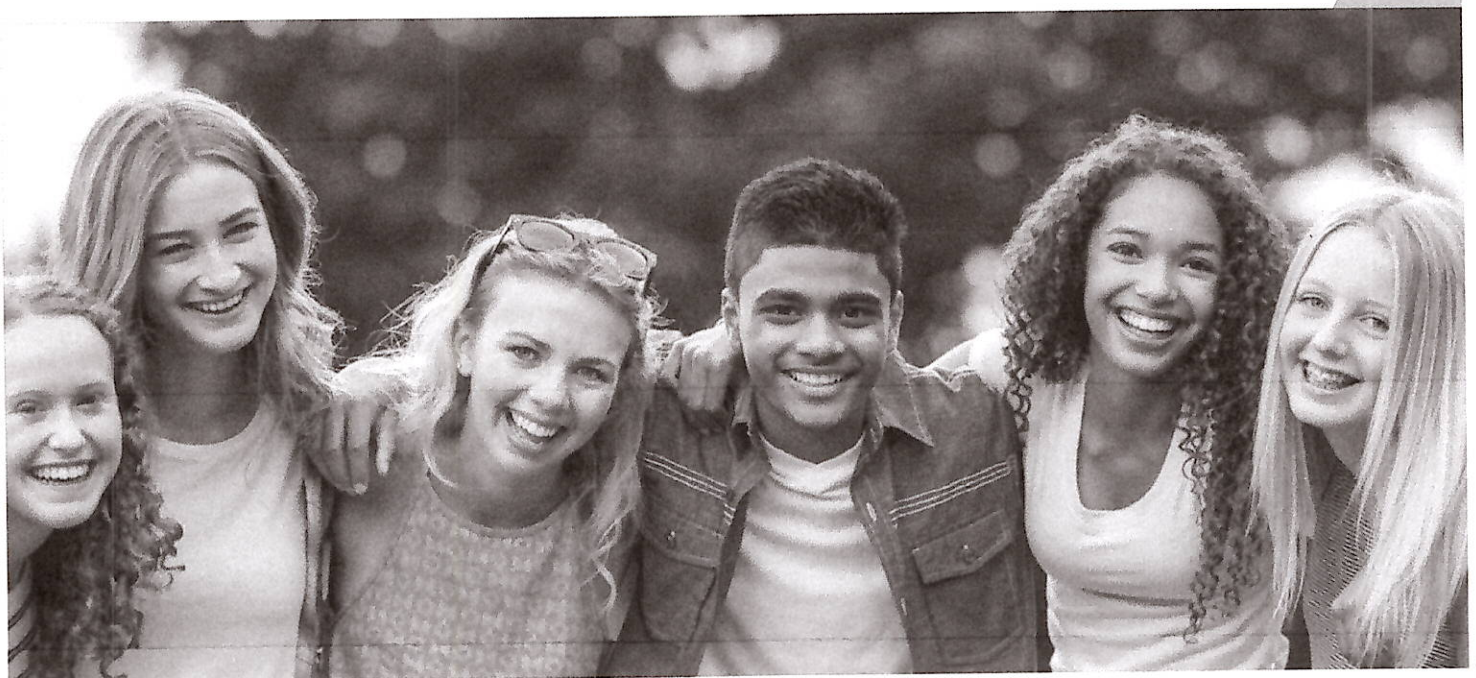


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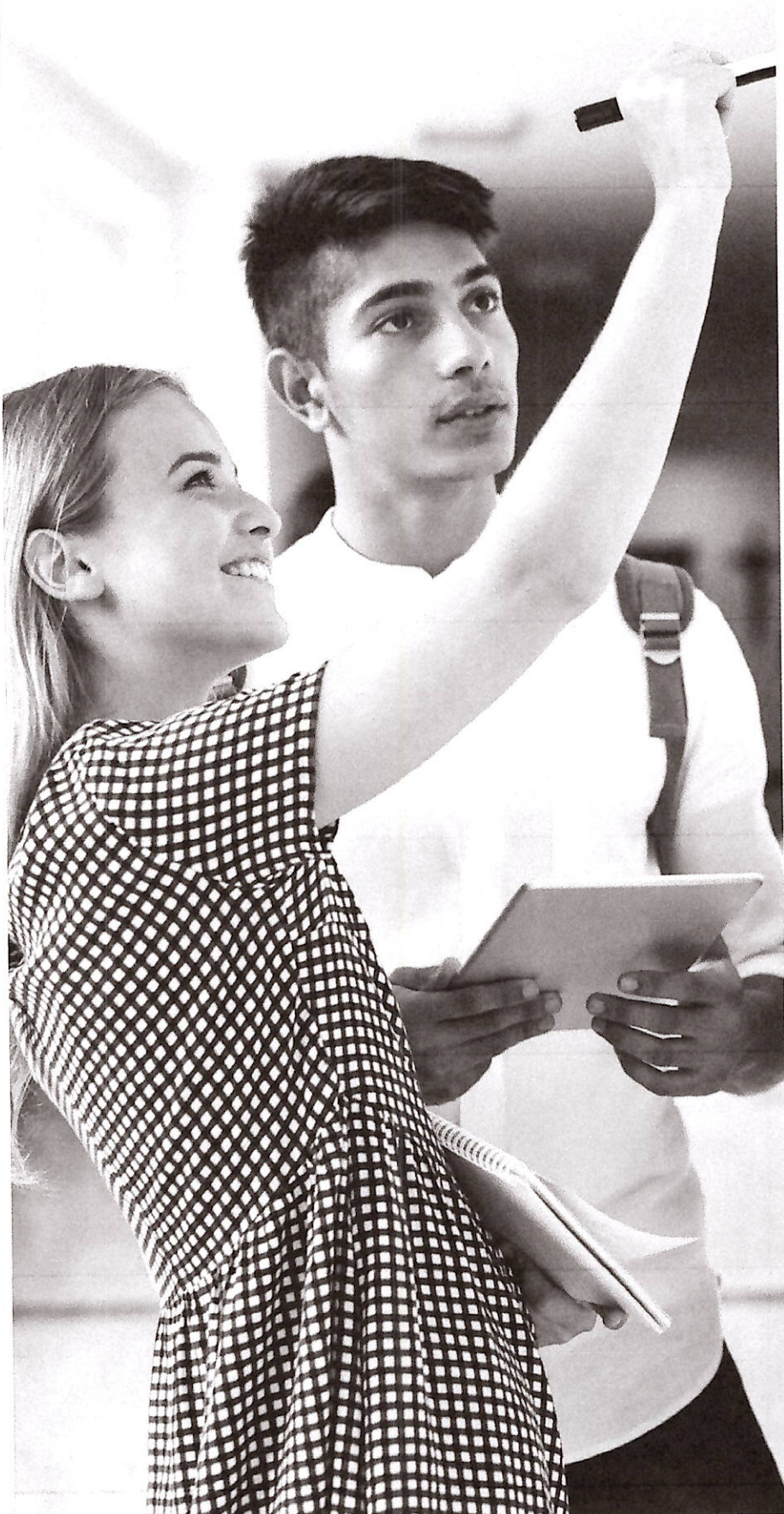
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OUR STORY



Resources

If you need help, please reach out now.

IMMEDIATE SERVICES

Immediate Emergency Services	Call 911
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	Call 988
Immediate Mental Health Resources and Essential Services	Call 211

TEXT HOTLINES

Text "BRIGHTER" to 741741 for free, 24/7, high-quality text-based mental health support and crisis intervention.

CRISIS SUPPORT HOTLINES

Alameda County Call 1-(800)-309-2131	National Alliance of Mental Illness Call 1-(800)-950-6264	City of San Francisco Call 1-(415)-731-0500
Contra Costa County Call 1-(800)-833-2900	National Domestic Violence Hotline Call 1-(800)-799-7233	The Trevor Project (LGBTQ+) Call 1-(866)-488-7386
		Veterans Crisis Line Call 1-(800)-902-5437

ONLINE CHAT HOTLINES

National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI)	https://www.nami.org/help
Veterans Crisis Line	https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help-now/chat/
The Trevor Project (LGBTQ+)	https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help/
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat

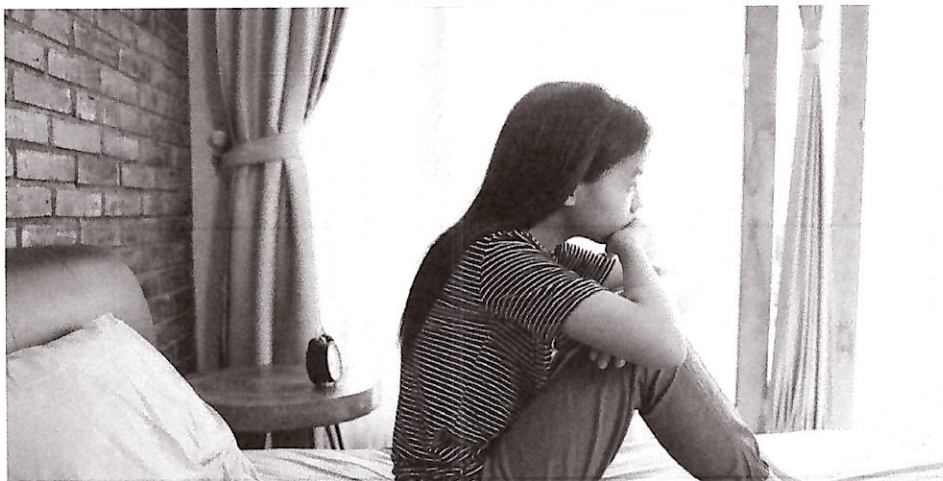
Signs and Symptoms of Depression

Symptoms of Depression:

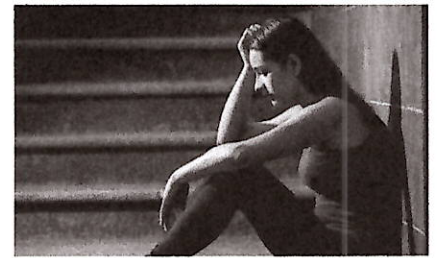
- Aches, pains, headaches, or cramps that won't go away
- Crankiness or irritability
- Decreased energy
- Digestive problems that don't get better, even with treatment
- Fatigue
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and helplessness
- Loss of interest in things once pleasurable, including sex
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Isolation from friends and family
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or sleeping too much
- Overeating, or appetite loss
- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" feelings
- Pessimism and hopelessness
- Restlessness
- Suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts
- Trouble concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions

Signs of Depression:

- Always talking or thinking about death
- A sudden switch from sadness to extreme calmness, or appearing to be happy
- Deep sadness, loss of interest, trouble sleeping and eating (that gets worse over time)
- Making comments about being hopeless, helpless, or worthless
- Saying things like "It would be better if I weren't here" or "I want out"
- Taking risks that could lead to death, such as driving through red lights
- Talking or thinking about suicide



What is Depression?



Depression is one of the most common mental disorders in the United States.

It causes severe symptoms that affect how you feel, think, and handle daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working.

Current research suggests that depression is caused by a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors.

While depression can happen at any age, it is now recognized as occurring in children and adolescents. Many chronic mood and anxiety disorders in adults begin as high levels of anxiety as children.

Causes of Depression

Depression is a complex mental illness. No one knows exactly what causes it, but it can happen for a variety of reasons. Some reasons include, but are not limited to:

- **Brain chemistry.** Neurotransmitters are naturally occurring brain chemicals that carry signals to other parts of your brain and body. When these chemicals are abnormal or impaired, the function of nerve receptors and nerve systems changes, leading to depression.
- **Hormones.** Changes in the body's balance of hormones may be involved in causing or triggering depression.
- **Inherited traits.** Depression is more common in people whose blood relatives also have the condition, such as a parent or grandparent.
- **Early childhood trauma.** Traumatic events during childhood, such as physical or emotional abuse, or loss of a parent, may cause changes in the brain that increase the risk of depression.
- **Learned patterns of negative thinking.** Teen depression may be linked to learning to feel helpless, rather than learning to feel capable of finding solutions for life's challenges.

Risk Factors for Teen Depression

Many factors increase the risk of developing or triggering teen depression, including:

- Having issues that negatively impact self-esteem, such as obesity, peer problems, long-term bullying or academic problems
- Having been the victim or witness of violence, such as physical or sexual abuse
- Having other mental health conditions, such as bipolar disorder, an anxiety disorder, a personality disorder, anorexia or bulimia
- Having a learning disability or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Having ongoing pain or a chronic physical illness such as cancer, diabetes or asthma
- Having certain personality traits, such as low self-esteem or being overly dependent, self-critical or pessimistic
- Abusing alcohol, nicotine or other drugs
- Being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender in an unsupportive environment
- Having a parent, grandparent or other blood relative with depression, bipolar disorder or alcohol use problems
- Having a family member who died by suicide
- Having a family with major communication and relationship problems
- Having experienced recent stressful life events, such as parental divorce, parental military service or the death of a loved one

Treatment and Therapies

Depression, even the most severe cases, can be treated. The earlier that treatment can begin, the more effective it is.

Depression is usually treated with psychotherapy, medication, or a combination of the two.

- Some forms of treatment include: psychotherapy (commonly known as “talk therapy”), medication, exercise therapy, light therapy, and brain stimulation therapies



Eight Ways to Help Someone with Depression

1. Provide Support

Your support and understanding can help your loved one during their time of need.

What you can do:

- Be willing to listen. Listen carefully and avoid giving advice, opinions, and making judgements. Listening to them and being understanding can be a powerful healing tool.
- Make plans together. Offer your time to your loved one; join them on a walk, see a movie together, and share an enjoyable experience with them. Do not force them into doing something they do not feel comfortable with.
- Offer assistance. Your loved one may not be able to complete tasks like they once did. Give suggestions about actions you would be willing to do and locate helpful organizations that they may benefit from.
- Provide love and positivity. People with depression may criticize themselves and find fault with everything they do. Remind them of their positive qualities and how much they mean to you.

2. Learn the Symptoms of Depression

Because no two people are affected the same way by depression, symptoms may range from mild to severe. These symptoms can cause little to extreme problems in day-to-day activities such as school, work, social activities, relationships with others, and relationship with themselves. Please refer to Page 7 for a list of signs and symptoms.

3. Encourage Treatment

People with depression may not recognize that they are depressed and think that their feelings are normal. Some individuals feel ashamed about their depression and believe they should be able to overcome it without the support of others or treatment. But depression rarely gets better without treatment and may worsen.

How you can help:

- Talk to the person about what you have observed and why you are concerned.
- Explain that depression is not a personal flaw or weakness.
- Suggest seeking help from a mental health professional. Consider a medical doctor or a mental health provider such as a licensed psychologist or therapist.
- Express your willingness to help by offering to help schedule appointments, going along with them to sessions, and spending time with them when they need company.

4. Identifying Warning Signs of Worsening Depression

Everyone experiences depression differently. Learn how depression affects your loved one and what to do when it gets worse. Worsening depression should be treated as soon as possible. Encourage them to partner with their medical team to create a plan for when symptoms progress.

5. Understand Suicide Risk

Those who have depression are at an increased risk for suicide. If your loved one is severely depressed, there may be possibility that they may feel suicidal. If necessary, take action.

- **Seek help.** Contact the person's doctor, mental health provider, or other health care professional.
- **Call a suicide hotline number.** The National Suicide Prevention Line can be reached at 1-(800)-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) to talk to a trained counselor.
- **Make sure the person is in a safe environment.** If possible, eliminate things that could be used to perform self-harm or suicide.
- **Call 911 or your local emergency number** if they are in danger of self-harm or suicide.

6. Stay Alert for Warning Signs of Suicide

Learn and stay alert for common warning signs of suicide or suicidal thoughts. Some examples may include, but are not limited to:

- **Talking about suicide** — for example, making statements such as "I'm going to kill myself," "I wish I were dead," or "I wish I hadn't been born"
- **Withdrawing from social contact** and wanting to be left alone
- **Feeling trapped or hopeless** about a situation
- **Doing risky or self-destructive things**, such as using drugs or driving recklessly
- **Giving away belongings** or getting affairs in order when there's no other logical explanation for why this is being done
- **Saying goodbye** to people as if they won't be seen again

7. Take Care of Yourself

Supporting someone with depression is not simple or easy. Ask others for help and take steps to avoid burning out or becoming frustrated. It can be easy to give yourself to others during a difficult time like this, set aside time for hobbies, exercise, and connecting with others.

8. Be Patient

While depression symptoms improve with treatment, it can take time. Finding the best treatment for the individual may require trying more than one type of treatment approach or medication. For some people, symptoms improve quickly after starting treatment. For others, it will take longer.

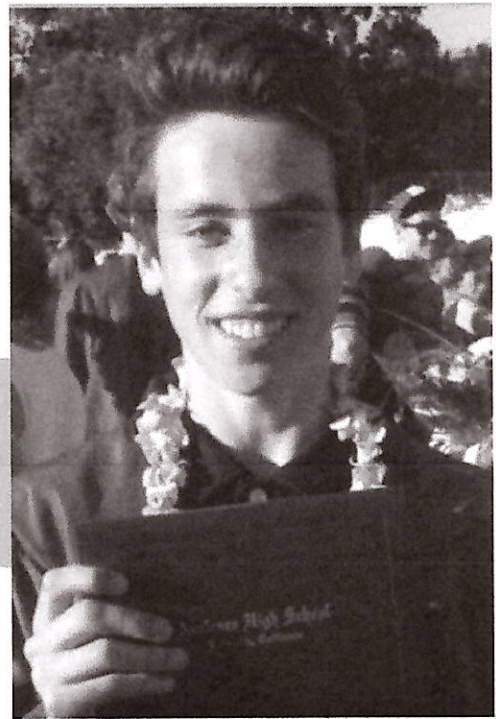
In Memory of Jake Kallen

Every year, tens of thousands of teenagers struggle with depression, suicidal thoughts, deep sadness, isolation, stress, and the feeling of helplessness.

This Teen Survival Toolkit was created to help teens and young adults learn more about signs and symptoms of depression and what they can do to empower themselves while struggling with their mental health.

From my family to yours, I thank you for being part of A Brighter Day.

Elliot Kallen, Founder



A BRIGHTER DAY

Mental Health Resources for Parents and Teens

www.abrighterday.org

1-(800) 832-1273