

# Behavioral Health Information For **ADOLESCENTS & TEENS**



CLINICA  
family health

303-650-4460 | [www.clinica.org](http://www.clinica.org)

# Why Mental Health Matters.

It is important to treat mental health concerns as you would a physical health concern, as our mental health can affect our physical health and wellbeing. Be aware of signs of depression or concerns related to drug and alcohol use. If you are a teen, or a parent of a teen, ask questions and talk to your primary care team about your concerns. Encourage and practice positive and healthy behaviors!



## Easy Ways to Boost Your Mental & Physical Health

- ✓ Regular exercise
- ✓ Healthy diet
- ✓ Get 9 to 11 hours of sleep for children ages 6-13 and 8-10 hours of sleep for teens age 14-17
- ✓ Spend time outside
- ✓ Explore a new interest or pick up an old interest
- ✓ Connect with family and friends
- ✓ Get involved in a school or community club, sport, or activity
- ✓ Practice mindfulness



## Want to Talk?

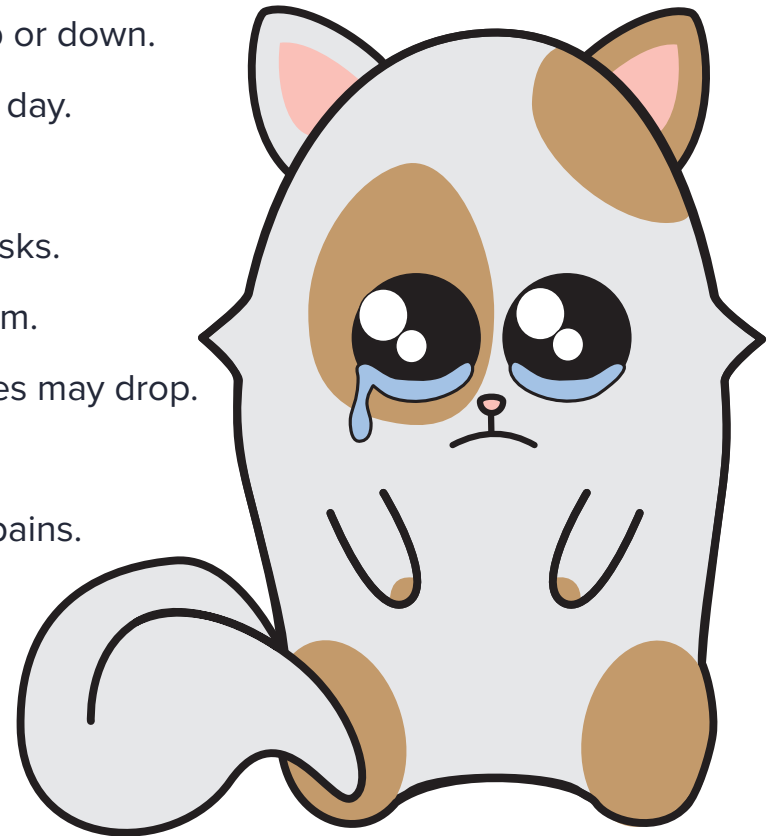
Schedule an appointment with a Clinica behavioral health provider. Existing patients can use the QR code, new patients, please call 303-650-4460.

# Learn How to Recognize Depression in Yourself and Others.

Feeling sad is part of life, but depression doesn't have to be. Sustained feelings of hopelessness that change your behavior and impact your relationships is one of the symptoms of depression. Use the list below to learn some of the others.

## Signs of Depression<sup>1</sup>

- A sad or irritable mood for most of the day. Feeling sad or angry or appearing more tearful or cranky.
- Not enjoying things that used to make you happy.
- A significant change in weight or eating, either up or down.
- Sleeping too little at night or too much during the day.
- No longer wanting to be with family or friends.
- A lack of energy or feeling unable to do simple tasks.
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt. Low self-esteem.
- Trouble focusing or making choices. School grades may drop.
- Not caring about what happens in the future.
- Unexplained aches and pains or new aches and pains.
- Thoughts of death or suicide.



<sup>1</sup>: [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)

# What Causes Depression?<sup>2</sup>

Teen depression is a serious mental health problem that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest in activities. Several factors can play a role in depression:

- **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, such as a parent or grandparent, also have the condition.
- **Early Childhood Trauma** - Traumatic events during childhood, such as physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or loss of a parent, may cause changes in the brain that make a person more susceptible to 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.

## Screen Time<sup>3</sup>

It is important to limit screen time to 2 hours or less per day, outside of school hours. Excessive screen time has been linked to increased risk of mental health concerns including risk of increased anxiety and depression, concerns related to body image, and lower grades in school. Screen time includes time spent on social media, TV, video games, and computers. Here are some tips for management of screen time for your family:

- Turn off all screens during family meals and outings.
- Use parental controls.
- Turn off screens and remove them from bedrooms 60 minutes before bedtime.
- Spend time outside and doing activities without screens.

# Substance Use

The human brain is not fully developed until early adulthood, usually the mid- to late-twenties. There is rapid brain development in adolescence and young adulthood, especially the parts of the brain responsible for decision making and judgment. Exposure to substances interferes with this development.

## Alcohol

Individuals who begin drinking during adolescence have significantly higher odds of developing an alcohol or other substance use disorder (addiction) than those who begin drinking at age 21 or later. The earlier a person starts drinking, the more likely they are to have a problem with drinking later on.

## Marijuana

The strength or potency of THC – the psychoactive ingredient responsible for the “high” associated with marijuana – has increased steadily since the 1960s. Higher potency is associated with more severe dependence and a greater likelihood among adolescents of developing psychosis and anxiety disorders.

### Signs of a problem with drug or alcohol use:

- Getting worse grades in school.
- Missing classes or skipping school.
- Losing interest in favorite activities.
- Getting in trouble in school or with the law.
- A change in eating or sleeping habits.
- Having more problems with family members and friends.
- A change in group of friends.

If you are concerned about a problem with drug or alcohol use, schedule an appointment with your primary care provider and request a behavioral health provider.

Parents and guardians, it is important to remember that substance use prevention is not about having a one-time talk, but rather frequent conversations that evolve as your child gets older. Keep lines of communication open, balance any consequences with positive encouragement, and use teachable moments as natural opportunities to discuss substance use ([www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)).



# You Are Not Alone.

Depression affects more than 13% of American youths, age 12 - 17.<sup>4</sup> This number increased drastically over 2021, largely in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact of educational and social interactions. While these numbers are higher than anyone would like, it means that there are a lot of other people experiencing similar struggles. Here are some examples of other people who have found ways to cope with their depression or anxiety and want to share what they've learned to help others.

## LANE JOHNSON<sup>5</sup>

Lane Johnson, NFL offensive tackle, recently took a three game leave of absence to get help with his mental health issues. The three-time Pro Bowler had been dealing with depression and anxiety since college, and could no longer ignore that he needed help. When asked why it took him so long to seek help, he explained;

“I was ashamed, to be honest. In this league, the NFL, where it's gladiator type sport, it's something that's not often talked about but is often felt throughout the league. We need to talk about it, but I was living in hell for a long time. I thought achievements, how I've done on the field, would make me feel better, but it only amplified the situation. Yeah, I'm glad I'm sitting here talking about it, finally being open about it.”



Lane urges anyone fighting anxiety, depression or other mental health issues to get help and not put it off like he did.

“Find your closest friend, family member, tell a loved one,” he said. “There’s always help around the corner. It’s not far. It’s never out of reach. And whenever you do this, you realize that you have a lot more in common with everybody else around you than you think.”

4: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/>

5: <https://www.nbcsports.com/>



## ARIANA GRANDE<sup>6</sup>

Ariana Grande's song, *Thank U, Next*, is about how Ariana's turned all her failed relationships into learning lessons. One Twitter fan jokingly inquired, "who is Ariana's therapist and are they accepting new clients?" Ari's response was genuine and powerful;

"Imaoao this is funny but in all honesty therapy has saved my life so many times. if you're afraid to ask for help, don't be. u don't have to be in constant pain & u can process trauma. i've got a lot of work to do but it's a start to even be aware that it's possible."

She also opened up about her struggles with anxiety in a 2018 BBC music special;

"You have ups and downs and sometimes you'll go weeks at a time where you will be crushing it and there will be no anxiety...and then something will happen that can trigger it and then you have a couple of down days."

She urges people to reach out to others, especially loved ones, to see if they need help.

# What to do if You are Concerned About Depression or Other Mental Health Issues:

- Schedule an appointment with your primary care provider and request to speak with a behavioral health professional. They might recommend psychotherapy (counseling to help with emotions and behavior) or medicine for depression. Some medical concerns can cause depression.
- In Colorado, the age of consent to receive psychotherapy is 12 years old. This means that beginning at the age of 12, a person can receive psychotherapy without a guardian's consent.

## Treat any Thoughts of Suicide as an Emergency

### Colorado Crisis Services

24 hour Crisis line: 1-844-493-8255

Text "TALK" to 38255

Walk-in crisis center: 2551 W 84th Ave,  
Westminster, CO 80031

<https://coloradocrisisservices.org/>

### National Suicide Prevention Line

24 hour Prevention line: 1-800-273-8255

### Crisis Text Line

Text **HOLA** to 741741 or 442-AYUDAME in WhatsApp to be connected to a trained Crisis Counselor in Spanish.

Text **CRISIS** to 741741 for English

**Call 911** or go to the nearest emergency room in case of life-threatening emergency

## Free Apps & Resources



**Calm Harm** (Free App) Help resist and manage thoughts of self-harm through a variety of means.



**Insight Timer** (Free App)  
Contains in-app purchases)  
Provides mindfulness resources.

**Mind Shift** (Free App) Self-help anxiety relief app using therapeutic techniques.



**Calm** (Free App Contains in-app purchases) Provides mindfulness resources.



**[www.imattercolorado.org/](http://www.imattercolorado.org/)**  
Online mental health screening tool for parents and teens.



**[www.mylifemyquit.com/](http://www.mylifemyquit.com/)**  
Website with free resources to help you quit vaping.