

Local Resources

Inova Kellar Center in Fairfax, VA at 703-218-8500 or at www.inova.org/kellar for more information or evaluation of your child or teenager.

Fairfax Partnership for Youth 2007 Interfaith Conference on Suicide Prevention and Mental Wellness "Bridging the Gap: Emergent Adulthood" May 8, 2007. Go to www.fairfaxyouth.org/toolkit/save.html to register for Conference and to download the toolkit of resources from the 2006 interfaith conference.

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in Washington, DC at 1-800-333-7636 or visit www.aacap.org

National Mental Health Association in Alexandria, VA at (703) 664-5968 or visit www.nmha.org

Children's National Medical Center, Dept of Psychiatry, www.dccchildrens.com or call (202) 884-500

National Association of School Psychologists in Bethesda, MD at (301) 657-0270 or visit <http://www.nasponline.org/families/index.aspx>

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Articles in this newsletter are not a substitute for the care and advice of medical professionals. When you have a question or need medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, consult your physician.

This newsletter is produced by Inova Health System in conjunction with your faith community. If you prefer not to receive this newsletter, please notify the appropriate personnel in your faith community.

Inova Health System is a not-for-profit health care system based in Northern Virginia that consists of hospitals and other health services including emergency and urgent care centers, home care, nursing homes, mental health, blood donor services, and wellness classes. Governed by a voluntary board of community members, Inova's mission is to improve the health of the diverse community we serve through excellence in patient care, education and research.



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For Your Health

May

2007

www.inovahealthsource.com

May is Mental Health Month

Childhood Depression Awareness



Congregational Health Partnership is a program of Inova HealthSource, Community Health Division



Depression in Teenagers

1 in 5 Youth has a Mental Health Problem

Teenagers are very prone to depression. The nature of this unstable transition from childhood to adulthood is such that there are significant physical (puberty) and emotional (dating, parent conflicts, school achievement) tensions.

Most severely depressed teens feel very isolated and alone. It is important for parents, siblings, and friends to reach out to them in a nonjudgmental way, to listen and reassure.

Keep in mind that even in the most stable teen, there will be turmoil. Get an evaluation early!

DEPRESSION IS TREATABLE:

- * get a counselor involved
- * begin psychotherapy, frequently over the teen's resistance
- * antidepressant and insomnia medication may be helpful
- * talking about depression and suicidal feelings will not make the problem worse generally
- * hospitalization may be helpful in severe cases as a safe place for emotional reconstitution

Depression: Symptoms & Causes

Depression **symptoms** can be:

1. Persistent sad moods and boredom
2. Decreased self confidence, worthlessness
3. Irritability, especially with parents
4. Social withdrawal, dropping out of school activities
5. Apathy, decreased school grades
6. Pessimism, "life sucks," "no purpose to life"
7. Alcohol or drug abuse, as a form of self treatment
8. Suicidal feelings in severe situations
9. Changes in eating habits and/or sleeping patterns



The Word of Faith:

Sometimes when people are experiencing depression, they feel that God has deserted them. All teens, and especially those who are feeling depressed, need the love, support, and compassion of their families and faith communities. Show by your presence the assurance of God's love and presence. Commend their worth. Give them hope. SJ

The **causes** of depression in teenagers are stress events such as:

- ⇒ breakups with a boyfriend or girlfriend
- ⇒ conflicts with parents or their divorce
- ⇒ school achievement problems
- ⇒ family history of depression or bipolar disorder, i.e. genetic history

Many mental health conditions run in families genetically:

- ♥ depression, anxiety, alcoholism, bipolar disorder
- ♥ anger management problems, stubbornness, extreme shyness

Adolescence is when a lot of these issues will surface emotionally.

What should I do if I think my child is depressed?

CALL FOR HELP:

CrisisLink 703-527-4077

National Hopeline Network

Connects you to a crisis center in your area 1-800-273-8255

Covenant House Nine Line

Operates a 24-hour teen crisis line. 1-800-999-9999

Girls and Boys Town USA

www.girlsandboystown.org
Hotline: 1-800-448-3000

BE AWARE: Teen suicide is the second most common means of death in this age group after accidents.

BE INFORMED:

www.troubleteen101.com

www.nimh.nih.gov

www.webmd.com

www.kidshealth.org

www.mentalhealthministries.net

www.childhelpusa.org

Work to Prevent Depression

Good child and adolescent mental health strategies begin in childhood:

- * Keep your children active in the community.
- * Join faith and community youth groups.
- * Join sports teams or social clubs.
- * Be involved in Scouting, volunteer and paid jobs.

The goal is success through effort so self esteem and self confidence is adequate for adolescence and beyond. Children don't have to be stars or champions – just participating is character building.

