

# CHILDREN & DEPRESSION

Most children feel sad and low every once in a while, but these feelings usually pass in a few days. Untreated depression, however, lasts for a long time and interferes with day-to-day activity.

Children who are depressed may complain of feeling sick, refuse to go to school, cling to a parent or caregiver, or worry excessively that a parent may die. Older children may sulk, get into trouble, be negative or grouchy, or feel misunderstood. Youth are more likely to respond to treatment if they receive it early in the course of their illness.



## WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Anger, irritability & agitation are typical
- Deep feelings of sadness and hopelessness
- Anxiety and fearfulness
- Physical complaints: headaches, stomachaches
- Withdrawal from family & friends
- Loss of interest/pleasure in activities
- Extreme sensitivity to rejection & failure
- Low self-esteem, guilt, feel worthless
- Trouble concentrating & making decisions
- Loss of energy/increased fatigue
- Insomnia or oversleeping
- Changes in appetite & weight (up or down)



## WHEN TO WORRY

All parents might see any of these symptoms in their children on occasion. It is time to seek professional help when:

- Multiple symptoms appear
- Over a long period of time
- Symptoms are interfering with the child's ability to function: refusal to go to school, personal hygiene, grades, lack of friends, troubled relationships, running away, self injury, substance abuse
- Child talks about wanting to die and has thoughts of suicide

*If you are concerned about your child, contact your family physician, reach out to your child's teacher and school counselor, and call one of the following Portage County agencies:*

### **Coleman Health Services**

330-296-3555 - 24 hours  
Walk-in mental health emergency  
3922 Lovers Lane, Ravenna

### **Children's Advantage**

330-296-5552

Risk factors that can increase the likelihood of depression in children or adolescents include family history of depression, suicide, or other major mental illness; stressful life events such as witness to or experience of child abuse, domestic violence, and loss; inconsistent and/or unstable caregiving; substance abuse; chronic illness in the child or family; family conflict; and poor social skills or unpopularity, including bullying.



330.673.1756 • 155 E. Main Street, Kent  
[www.mental-health-recovery.org](http://www.mental-health-recovery.org)



I don't want to live anymore.  
You'd be better off without me.  
I will never feel any better.

## What About Suicide?

There's no single cause for suicide. Suicide most often occurs when stressors exceed current coping abilities of someone suffering from a mental health condition. Depression is the most common condition associated with suicide, and it is often undiagnosed or untreated. Conditions like depression, anxiety and substance use problems, especially when unaddressed, increase risk for suicide.

## Risk Factors for Suicide

- Depression
- Having a drug and/or alcohol problem
- Significant loss by death, separation, divorce, moving or relationship break-up
- Social isolation
- History of abuse/neglect
- Family history of suicide
- Access to firearms

## How you can help

Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. Depression is a treatable disorder. A depressed person is in emotional pain, has lost hope, cannot think clearly about alternative coping strategies, and cannot think logically about their value to friends and family.

Ask questions to help a depressed and suicidal person:

"You seem pretty down. Do things seem hopeless to you? Are you having thoughts that it would be easier to be dead? Are you thinking about suicide?"

You cannot make someone suicidal by talking about it. It is helpful to show the person you take them seriously and you care. Most people feel relieved to have a chance to talk. If you get a "yes" answer, don't panic. Stay with them until they get help - by calling a hotline or going to a doctor.

Suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for people aged 15-34 years old and 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause for children ages 10-14.



In Crisis call or text 988  
or call our local helpline 330-678-4357

Call anytime if you are concerned for yourself or a loved one in a mental health crisis.

## Portage County Treatment & Services

Treatment begins with a call or visit to the following local agencies.

### Children's Advantage

771 N. Freedom St., Ravenna  
330-296-5552

### Coleman Health Services

5982 Rhodes Rd, Kent  
330-673-1347

### Family & Community Services

143 Gougler Ave, Kent  
330-677-4124