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## WHAT IS DEPRESSION IN TEENS?

A mental health concern that often includes an intense or constant feeling of sadness or loss of interest in activities. It affects teens' emotional, functional and physical skills while impacting the way they think, feel and behave. One in 5 teens will experience depression before adulthood. Teen depression can be caused by a series of stressors, negative life changes and traumatic events.

Teen stressors may include:

- School Stress
- Peer Pressure
- Relationship Problems
- Parental Separation
- Financial Problems
- Physical/Emotional Neglect
- Trauma

Depression can often be confused with “teenage angst.” Depression is serious but it is also treatable! If you recognize these symptoms in your players, it’s important to offer support, validate their feelings and encourage them to seek treatment if necessary.

## SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION CAN

### INCLUDE:

- Feelings of sadness and hopelessness
- Displaying an irritable or annoyed mood
- Loss of interest in activities
- Conflict with others
- Low self-esteem
- Fixations or extreme sensitivity to past failures
- Trouble thinking or concentrating
- Frequent thoughts of death or dying
- Insomnia or excess sleep
- Poor hygiene
- Angry outbursts or risky behavior
- Having a suicide plan or attempt
- A change in appetite

## DEPRESSION ON THE FIELD

- Lack of interest in participating
- Becoming overly sensitive or fixated on failures
- Having conflict with others
- Displaying extreme frustration or irritability
- Not socializing after/before practices or games



## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

- **Normalize depression;** About 10-15% of teens will experience depressive symptoms. These symptoms can vary in severity, but it is important to recognize them and offer support before your athletes develop a depressive disorder.
- **Encourage social relationships/interactions** among your team so they will have support friends and teammates to help them cope. Positive peer groups also encourage players to make healthy choices.
- **Implement team building activities** that are different from the sport- team-building or other fun activities are encouraged during practice, it can take the pressure off of athletes to perform well and is a great way to encourage the social relationships among your team and reducing stress.
- **Find a reasonable balance with corrective feedback vs positive support-** Poorly delivered corrective feedback and discipline practices can make depressive symptoms more severe as it can lower their self-esteem, increase sensitivity to failures and encourage a loss of interest in activities. On the other hand, appropriate reinforcement and positive strategies can encourage better performance and help athletes achieve their goals.
- **Create awareness and coping strategies** through offering support to your players such as resources and open-communication. Coping strategies can include deep breathing, meditation, and mindfulness of the nature of negative emotions. Additionally, open communication can be a deciding factor in whether or not athletes seek help and treatment. If athletes are not comfortable seeking support, implementing coping strategies can be supportive.

### Remember:

**If you are concerned, have the conversation and reach out with help and support.**

## RESOURCES

[MAYO CLINIC](#)

[PSYCHOLOGY TODAY](#)

[MHA NATIONAL](#)

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