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How You Can Help Your Child When He's Depressed

There are things you can do to help your child. Learn what they are, and try them out.

It's not easy being the parent of a deaf child. Sometimes it's hard for you to know what to do. Try not to ignore a problem that might be coming up.

What you can do

If your teenager is showing some signs of depression, or if there is a big change in how they act, try these ideas:

- Talk with them about what you see. Ask if they are okay. Sit patiently. Listen with your eyes and your ears.
- Let your child know that you're worried about him.
- Talk with a good friend or relative, a teacher, a minister, or someone else that your child knows and trusts. Sometimes teachers are the ones who know what to do. They also might know the professionals who know about deafness. If you can, get someone who knows deafness to see your child. It's important that they understand how it could affect your child.

If you're still worried, call a professional for help

If you continue to be worried, call a professional for help. This could be:

- A school counselor
- A social worker
- A psychologist
- A psychiatrist
- Your pediatrician
- A family doctor

Counseling or talk therapy can help your teen express his feelings and begin to feel more "in control." Many counselors or therapists use talk to help children and teens with depression.

- **Individual therapy** is when your child speaks with someone alone.
- **Family therapy** includes you and other important members of the family.
- **Group therapy** includes other children who are having the same problems.

Medicine can help your teen, too

There are also some medicines that can help teenagers with depression. These medicines are called **antidepressants** (<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/glossary/?id=249>).

Many of the new antidepressants have few side effects. But your doctor should be careful in prescribing them and checking your child when she is taking them. You should also make sure your child is taking the right amount of medicine. Call your doctor if your child acts strangely after taking the medicine.

Work closely with your family, your teen's teachers and therapists. Share information with them so everyone knows what's going on with your child. Make sure they are also watching to see if the signs of depression get worse. If so, get more help.

Reach out to your teen

You're probably busy working and taking care of your family. Or you may be dealing with your own problems.

Your child may feel the stress at home. He may not want to bother you with his problems. But try to look out for signs that your child is having problems of his own.

Remember!

- Your child's feelings are important.
- Children can become depressed, just like adults.
- Depression in childhood is serious and can cause a lot of pain.
- Loving families and communities can work together and help these children to feel better.

You can find this page online at:

<http://www.raisingdeafkids.org/special/depression/help.jsp>