

# BACK TO SCHOOL: *Recognizing Depression*

It's not unusual to have "the blues" or feel down occasionally—especially when you are in middle or high school. Bodies go through major chemical changes as you mature. The expectations of your teachers, family and friends—and the fear of not meeting them—can create stress and worry. When things go wrong at school or at home, you may feel unsure of yourself or wonder how you fit in. The idea of preparing for college or making decisions about your future can be overwhelming. On top of that, you face choices about friendships, sex, alcohol, and drugs. You may feel like you are getting mixed messages from parents, teachers, friends, and society.

Feeling down from time to time is different than having depression. When you have depression, it feels like there is a dark cloud over everyone and everything, and it is hard to feel good.

# 3.1

MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 12-17 DEAL WITH PERIODS OF MAJOR DEPRESSION.<sup>1</sup>

# 78%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 11-17 WHO TOOK MHA'S DEPRESSION SCREEN SCORED POSITIVE FOR MODERATE TO SEVERE DEPRESSION.<sup>2</sup>

## *Signs of Depression*

It is important to recognize depression so it can be treated. The earlier you get help, the sooner you can get back to feeling like yourself again. If you have some of the symptoms below, you might be dealing with depression.<sup>3</sup>

- HAVING TROUBLE WITH SCHOOLWORK
- NOT PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVITIES YOU USED TO ENJOY
- SADNESS AND HOPELESSNESS
- LACK OF ENTHUSIASM, ENERGY OR MOTIVATION
- ANGER AND RAGE
- OVERREACTION TO CRITICISM
- FEELINGS OF BEING UNABLE TO MEET EXPECTATIONS
- POOR SELF-ESTEEM OR GUILT
- PROBLEMS WITH MAKING DECISIONS, LACK OF CONCENTRATION OR FORGETFULNESS
- RESTLESSNESS AND AGITATION
- CHANGES IN EATING OR SLEEPING PATTERNS
- REBELLING AGAINST PARENTS, TEACHERS, OR OTHER AUTHORITY FIGURES
- SUICIDAL THOUGHTS OR ACTIONS

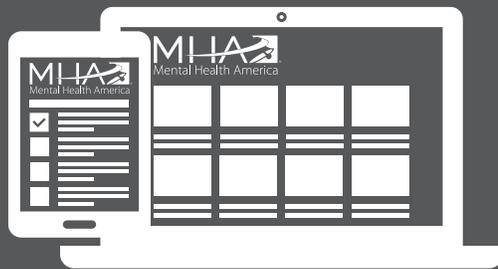
## Don't Suffer in Silence

Depression can make people feel hopeless about their current circumstances or the future. Left untreated, depression can cause some young people to think about doing drastic or violent things.

If you see suspicious posts on social media or hear people say things that suggest they might be planning to hurt themselves or other people, tell an adult right away. If you feel this way, don't suffer in silence! It is important to remember that there is help and there is hope.

If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts, seek immediate help by calling 911 or going to the closest emergency room. Trust your instincts, and if necessary, break a confidence in order to save a life.

SCREENING IS AN ANONYMOUS, FREE, AND PRIVATE WAY TO LEARN ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND IF YOU ARE SHOWING WARNING SIGNS OF A CONDITION. A SCREENING IS NOT A DIAGNOSIS, BUT IT CAN BE A HELPFUL TOOL FOR STARTING A CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE YOU TRUST ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH.



TAKE THE YOUTH SCREEN  
AT [MHASCREENING.ORG](http://MHASCREENING.ORG)

If you just don't feel right or notice that someone else is struggling, it's important to get help sooner rather than later. Reach out to a friend or trusted adult and tell them how you feel or that you are worried about someone. If you need help starting a conversation, visit [www.mentalhealthamerica.net/timetotalk](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/timetotalk) for tips on how to get started.

TRAINED CRISIS COUNSELORS ARE AVAILABLE 24/7 BY TEXTING "MHA" TO 741-741 OR CALLING 1-800-273-TALK(8255).

YOU CAN ALSO DOWNLOAD THE NOTOK APP ON GOOGLE PLAY OR THE APP STORE. THE NOTOK APP ALLOWS YOU TO IDENTIFY UP TO 5 PEOPLE WHO WILL RECEIVE A NOTIFICATION WHEN YOU PRESS A BUTTON INDICATING THAT YOU'RE NOT OK.

### Sources

<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2017). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. SMA 17-5044, NSDUH Series H-52). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

<sup>2</sup> Proprietary data from [mhascreening.org](http://mhascreening.org).

<sup>3</sup> American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.)*. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.



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