



BalanceWorks® Newsletter

November 2009 | Written by the work/life experts at **eni**



Depression in Children and Adolescents

Could your child be depressed? The rate of childhood and adolescent depression has increased at an alarming rate for decades. The average age of onset has dropped significantly, and over half of these depressed children risk the recurrence of depression within seven years. Symptoms of adolescent depression are similar to adult depression and should be taken as seriously. The primary difference between childhood and adult depression is that children tend to reveal their depression through behavior, while adults do so verbally.

Symptoms

- Loss of energy, appearing sick
- Mood swings and negative self talk
- Aggressive actions, talk of suicide
- Anger and hate towards everything
- Disruptive behavior in school
- Poor performance in school

Causes of Depression

It is difficult to pinpoint exact causes of depression. Depression in children and adolescents can be attributed to poor parenting, negative feelings, and traumatic experiences. Depression can also be hereditary if there is a history of psychiatric conditions in one's family. Depression in some children

and adolescents could be innate, then triggered by an environmental situation.

Child and adolescent behavior changes in every aging stage, making it difficult to separate depression from just a "phase." Depression can be determined by visiting your child's physician, who will suggest a mental evaluation by a therapist if the child is physically healthy. If the child is diagnosed as depressed, treatment will need to be administered.

Treatment

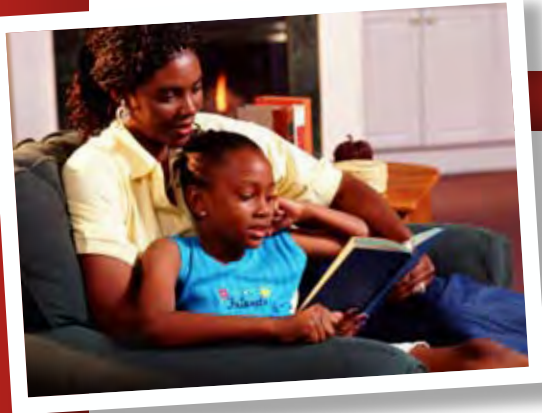
Treatment of depression usually begins with psychotherapy. It is believed that cognitive-behavioral therapy may be most effective. The adolescent is encouraged to view themselves and situations positively instead of destructively. Family therapy is also an option. If the child does not respond well to psychotherapy, anti-depressants such as Prozac or Zoloft may be prescribed.

Once treatment has ended, it is important to understand the possibility of recurrence. The child or adolescent, and family, should be educated on the early warning signs of depression so it can be treated as soon as possible.

For more information or support about childhood or adolescent depression contact the work/life experts at **BalanceWorks®** by calling:

1.800.EAP.CALL

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Recognizing ADHD

to be easily confused, lethargic, and often appear to daydream. They are not hyperactive or impulsive, but have difficulty concentrating or focusing.

Diagnosing ADHD

Diagnosis is often difficult because many children display these characteristics. In order to have ADHD a child must fall into these guidelines:

- Behavior is detrimental to at least two aspects of a child's life such as school, home, and social settings.
- Behaviors appear before the age of seven and continue for at least six months.
- Behavior is inappropriate to the child's age.

Treatment

There are many different treatments of ADHD. The Multimodal Treatment Study of Children with ADHD used medication, behavioral treatment, a combination of both, or community care. Medication and the behavioral treatment combined were found to be the best treatments for ADHD. Behavioral treatment attempts to organize the child and change his or her behavior. Ask your doctor to help choose what treatment is best for your child.

Almost every child seems to have a short attention span. It is natural for children to let their minds wander, but sometimes it is much more serious. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) appears in the early stages of a child's life. Approximately 3 to 5 percent of children in the United States have ADHD, which equals about two million. There are different types of ADHD that vary by situation, making it difficult to diagnose. It is easy to believe that these symptoms will disappear on their own; however, ADHD usually remains into adult life.

Symptoms

Impulsivity: Inability to think before actions, difficulty restraining emotions, speaking inappropriately without thinking of the consequence, acting out regardless of possible punishment.

Hyperactivity: Constant moving or fidgeting, inability to sit still in class or stay quiet, overwhelming urge to touch or play with something.

Inattention: Incompletion of tasks, easy distraction by sights or sounds, failure to follow directions, forgetfulness.

Types of ADHD

There are two types of ADHD. Hyperactivity-Impulsivity ADHD does not always include inattention, but the inability to be calm and think rationally. Children with Inattentive ADHD seem

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