Finding Hope
Depression in Young People

Ashley Miller, M.D,C.M., FRCPC
Mood and Anxiety Disorders Clinic
BCMHAS, BC Children’s Hospital
Outline

- How do I know if my child is depressed?
- What causes youth depression?
- What impact can depression have?
- How do I find help?
- What are treatments for depressed youth?
- What can parents do?
- Time for questions
How to Recognize Depression
In Children and Teens
What is Depression?

“
I'm tired of being sad. I'm tired of crying. I'm tired of feeling empty inside. I'm tired of feeling worthless. I'm tired of feeling stuck. I'm tired of feeling crazy. I'm tired of being alone. I'm tired of yelling. I'm tired of pretending. I’m so tired of being tired.”
What is Depression?

BLACKNESS

NUMBNESS

PAIN

FOG
Types of Depression

- Mild Depression
- Major Depression
- Bipolar depression
How to recognize youth depression

- Persistent sadness, tearfulness or irritability for weeks
- Loss of interest or enjoyment
- Marked changes in appetite, sleep, energy or concentration
- Low motivation
- Slowness or agitation
- Excessive guilt or shame (negative about self)
- Thoughts of suicide or self-destructive behavior
Not just like adults

- Bored, grumpy, argumentative
- May seem happy sometimes
- Social withdrawal
- Physical complaints
- New school problems
- Substance use
- Other mental health problems may have come first (i.e. High anxiety, ADHD, learning disorders, eating disorders)
Depressed Boys (and some girls)

- May not verbalize feelings
- May act out (i.e. Argue, be aggressive, use substances)
- May not think it’s socially acceptable
- Are at higher risk of hurting themselves seriously
Depression is not....

- Laziness
- Bad behaviour
- Just puberty or regular ups and downs
- Parents’ fault
- Something you can easily get out of by yourself
Risk Factors for Depression in Youth
Individual
Social/Environmental
What causes youth depression?
Outcomes of Depression in Childhood and Adolescence
Outcomes of Adolescent Depression

- Untreated episodes last on average 7-9 months
- 86-98% recover by 2 years
- Often recurs
- Affects social, academic and family functioning
- May lead to substance use, behavioral problems, early sexual behavior
Youth Suicide

- Suicidal thoughts are common
- Attempts are more rare
- It’s OK to ask
- Once you know, things can get better
- Stay Calm; don’t blame; find help
Getting Help

I have a fear of abandonment.
Where to go for help?

- Crisis lines, online resources
- Family physician/GP/ Pediatrician
- School counsellor
- Psychologist
- Psychiatrist
- Local Child and Youth Mental Health Team
- Outreach workers
- Peer support worker
Treatment of Youth Depression

- Psychoeducation
- Self-Care Strategies
  - Dealing with Depression: Antidepressant Skills for Teens
- Establish family, school and community supports
- Decrease demands; maintain structure
- Frequent appointments
- Talk therapy / Psychotherapy
- Biological Therapies
Self-Care
Holiday Self-Care

Keep a routine

Make a plan

Permission to decrease family expectations

Acknowledge grief (anniversary reactions)
Psychotherapy

- Individual or Group
- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy
- Interpersonal Psychotherapy
- Family Therapy (involve siblings)

Medication
Hospitalization

- When is this necessary?
  - Very rarely.
  - Risk to self or others, psychosis
  - Outpatient treatment not working

- How does it happen?
  - Emergently
  - Planned

- What are the benefits?
  - Full diagnostic picture
  - Safety
What Can Parents Do To Help?

A LOT!!!!
“You can’t begin to imagine how embarrassing it is to be seen with you.”
What Can Parents Do to Help?

- Take care of **yourself**
- Try to keep the family routine
- Connect with other parents (the F.O.R.C.E)
- Advocate for your child
What can parents do to help?

- Check-in with your child/ Be open to talk
  FRIENDS for Life tips
  http://friendsparentprogram.com/
- Stay calm, non-judgmental
- Listen, listen, listen
- Validate, don’t try to fix
- Don’t be afraid to share what helps you if you have had depression
What Can Parents Do to Help?

- Play together; Just Be together
- Help your child remember what s/he loves to do
- Acceptance before change
- Expect change to take time
- Focus on changing only one thing at a time
- Help your child simplify and prioritize too
- Hold hope for your child
Questions?
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
Interpersonal Psychotherapy
Mindfulness Based Therapies

- Effective for relapse prevention
- Focus on present awareness
- Compassion for self
- Group or individual format
- Practice at home
Non-pharmaceuticals

- Light therapy
- Omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D
- St-John’s Wort
- ECT for treatment-resistant depression
Medications

- Ask your doctor
- Watch “In the Know”
  - www.forcesociety.com
When to get immediate help

- Child reveals imminent plan to end life
- You observe signs of plan: suicide note, giving away belongings, goodbyes to friends
- Severe child and/or family distress
- Trust your intuition
Resource Materials

- Dealing with Depression Workbook
- Facts for Families (AACAP)
- Depression is the Pits but I’m Getting Better: A Guide for Adolescents by E. Jane Garland
- knowledge.ca “Beyond the Blues”
- www.forcesociety.com “In The Know”
  - Archives: “How to talk to your child about their disorder”
  - Archives: “Psychotropic medications”
Where to go for help?

- Reliable websites
  - www.forcesociety.org
  - www.Keltymentalhealth.ca
  - www.Youthinbc.com
  - www.Heretohelp.bc.ca
  - www.Suicideinfo.ca
  - aacap.org/cs/forFamilies
  - www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/
  - www.friendsparentprogram
Where to go for help?

- Crisis Lines
  - 1-800-SUICIDE
  - YOUTH LINE 250-564-8336 or 1-888-564-8336
  - Youthinbc.com
    - 24 hour distress line
      - 604.872.3311
      - 1.866.661.3311
  - Kids Help Phone
    - 1-800-668-6868
    - Kidshelppphone.ca

- ***online chat