



How to help a teenager with anxiety and depression

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Depression and anxiety aren't exclusive to adults. Studies have shown that the number of teenagers suffering from depression and anxiety has increased by 70% in the past 25 years.

It is important to be able to spot the [symptoms of depression](#) in your teen son or daughter as soon as possible to ensure they get the [help for depression](#) that they need.

We will show you what symptoms to look out for and how you can help a teenager to minimise disruption to their life and reduce the likelihood of long-term [mental health](#) issues.

Spotting the signs

While anxiety and depression can be debilitating for anyone, the added pressures of changing hormones can make mental health issues particularly daunting for a teenager.

For many, our teenage years are when we feel at our most self-conscious. 'What will my friends think of me?' and 'Will I be laughed at?' may be some of the questions stopping your teenager from taking those all-important first steps towards seeking help and advice.

Knowing the signs and symptoms to look out for as a parent or schoolteacher can help manage depression or anxiety in teens and support them through this difficult period of their lives.

[Signs and symptoms of anxiety](#) and depression in a teenager may include the following:

- Academic performance drastically declines for no clear reason
- Their low mood lasts longer than a few weeks
- Lack of interest in activities they used to enjoy
- Feeling tired for much of the day
- Problems concentrating either at school and home
- Unable to relax
- Interacts less with friends and family

Teenagers may experience anxiety and depression separately. The two mental health conditions can also occur at the same time, so it's important to also look out for physical complaints of anxiety such as [headaches, racing heart, and chest tightening](#).

What to do next

Talk to them about how they feel

If your teenager becomes wary of talking at length when the conversation is focused on school achievements or what events are planned into their daily routine, try to find out more about how they feel.

Asking them what they have enjoyed or not enjoyed during their day can provide a glimpse into how they feel about their daily struggles, including relationships with peers and how they view themselves as soon-to-be-adults in the wider world.

Give them their own space and avoid punishment

If you find out your teenager has been behaving poorly in school or has been keeping something important from you, it will benefit their wellbeing if you respond calmly.

Becoming angry or issuing a punishment won't help you find the cause of their mental health issues long-term, as their behaviour may be an outward response to their inner feelings. Respond compassionately to help build an understanding of what might be troubling them, while giving your teen their own space. This will help you remain mindful of changes in personality or sleeping and eating patterns, while avoiding tackling the situation with unjustified judgement.

Encourage them to look after their physical health

There are significant links between physical and mental health, with symptoms of depression likely to worsen if a teenager doesn't get the right balance of exercise, sleep, or diet and nutrition.

The release of the 'happy' chemicals in the brain called endorphins during exercise can help reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. At least an hour a day of physical activity is recommended for teenagers, and encouraging them to take up a sport of their choice can also help them build their social network.

If you are worried that your teenager may be suffering from anxiety or depression, then you can advise them to see their GP for initial mental health assessment. Priory's [child and adolescent services](#) offer specialist treatment from therapists with specific experience of treating mental health conditions in young adults.

Get in Touch Today

For details of how Priory can provide you with assistance regarding young people's mental health and wellbeing, please call **0800 691 1560** or [click here to submit an enquiry form](#). For professionals looking to make a referral, [please click here](#)

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