DEPRESSION AND LOSS THROUGH THE TEEN LENS: PARENTING STRATEGIES FOR BETTER TOMORROWS

DR. BETH TRAMMELL, PhD, HSPP
DIRECTOR, MA IN MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY
INDIANA UNIVERSITY EAST

• OVER THE COURSE OF THIS SERIES
  • SEVEN TRUTHS ABOUT DEPRESSION THAT YOUR TEEN WANTS YOU TO KNOW
    • AND THREE TAKEAWAYS FROM THESE
  • WARNING SIGNS FOR SUICIDE
  • SPECIFIC WAYS TO TALK ABOUT THESE THINGS THROUGHOUT
My depression isn’t your fault. And it isn’t my fault either.

My depression doesn’t always look like your depression.

I can’t control it. And sometimes, I can’t name it.

I’m not easy to love when I’m depressed. But please keep loving me more.

I’m going to say I don’t want help.

I’ll probably need therapy. I might need medication.

I’ll likely talk about dying. And if that is scary for you, it is WAY scarier for me.
OUR BIG TAKEAWAY #1
DEPRESSION IS A BIG PROBLEM

- An estimated *2.3 million teens have depression (9.4% of the population), likely underrepresentation
  - Of that, 71% had severe impairment
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for teens; depression often a contributing factor
- Approximately *60% of teens with depression don’t get treatment.
- A recent survey** of more than 100K college students reported approximately 40% had depression.
  - **88% of them said their mental wellness negatively impacted their academic performance.

*National Institutes of Mental Health
**Healthy Minds Network

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Many of our teens are experiencing depression.
WHAT DO WE DO TO HELP?

DEPRESSION IS A BIG PROBLEM
HELPING - TEEN TRUTH #1

• **Start by having a conversation about “depression.”**

• “I went to this training today and it reminded me of how important it is to talk with you about how you are doing. One specific thing I want to chat about is depression.

• **What does depression mean to you?**”
DEPRESSION IS A BIG PROBLEM
HELPING - TEEN TRUTH #1

• Use reassuring statements like:
  • “It’s okay to feel depressed.”
  • “It’s okay to feel down.”
  • “It’s okay to feel sad.”
  • “It’s okay that you don’t always know how to describe how you feel.”

DEPRESSION IS A BIG PROBLEM
HELPING - TEEN TRUTH #1

• Keep the door for conversations wide open.
  • “I love you and I want to keep checking in with you about this. Can we come up with a way together that I can check back in with you?”
  • “I want you to come to me anytime to talk about this, no matter what else I am doing, I will make time for you.”
  • “This can feel hard to talk about. And you probably won’t want to talk about it. But please come to me and share how you are feeling.”
Major changes in behavior, mood, engagement
Changes in sleep, eating
Mood problems, irritability
Somatic complaints
Expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness
Grades dropping

Substance use
Withdrawal, anger
Crying, sadness
Apathy
Suicidal statements
Self-harm
Running away
WHEN TO ASK FOR HELP