

Ten Top Tips[©]

when living with an unhappy teen

Here are ten tips that may help you see the warning signs of adolescent depression and self-harm!

1. **It is important to encourage teenagers to talk about their problems and to be available and willing to listen when they do.** Acknowledge that while your teenagers' problems may seem trivial to you, they are extremely important to them.
2. **If you feel your teenagers are unhappy, ask them how they are feeling.** Don't ignore their concerns. Let them know you are there for them, even if they don't want to talk at that moment.
3. **Be aware that teenagers also suffer from stress.** Help them learn appropriate ways of dealing with stress in their lives. If you don't feel able to provide this advice, then find out what's on offer in the school or your local community.
4. **Try not to focus solely on your teenagers' achievements or what they aren't doing right.** Let them know that they are cared for despite their mistakes and shortcomings. Praise them for *whatever* it is they do well.
5. **If your teenagers tell you they are feeling depressed or stressed out, attempt to open up conversation** by asking them to help you understand what's happening for them. Avoid offering advice like: "You'll get over it" or "We all have bad days, think about the good side of life". This only devalues their experience.
6. **Ask your teenager how they would like you to help them** or offer them the option of counselling.
7. **Attempt to ensure that your teenagers have a good support network if they are feeling depressed.** Ask them if they have friends they can talk to, or someone else they feel comfortable talking to. For example, a school chaplain or counsellor, a youth worker, an older brother or sister etc.
8. **If your teenagers talk about harming themselves or attempting suicide, take it seriously.** It is better to err on the side of caution than to let inaction result in tragedy.

PTO



CENTRE CARE

"People making time for people"

9. If you are worried about your teenager attempting suicide, look out for the following warning signs:

- Stressful events, like relationship break-ups, family conflict, loss, the death of someone close, school/job failure or problems etc.
- Talking about suicide or „not being around anymore“.
- Making plans to „leave“, like giving away belongings and saying goodbye.
- Withdrawing from family and friends.
- Drop in performance at school or work or non-attendance.
- Lethargy.
- Increase in risk-taking behaviour.
- Increase in alcohol or drug use.
- Sudden mood changes.
- Changes in sleep patterns.
- State of calm, relief after a period of depression or anxiety.

10. If your teenager’s depression persists, or your teenager is at risk or has attempted suicide, do not hesitate to seek help.

Call the following numbers for advice, support or counselling for you or your teenager:

Crisis Care	9223 1111 or 1800 199 008
Mental Health Emergency Response Line	9224 8888 or 1300 555 788 (all hours)
Parenting WA Line	1800 654 432
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800
Samaritan Youthline	9388 2500 or 1800 198 313
Youthlink	1300 362 569
Centrecare CY Counselling & Mediation	9325 6644