

# Depression in children and young people: identification and management

Information for the public

Published: 25 June 2019

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

## Depression in children and young people: the care you should expect

Depression affects children and young people but can be harder to recognise than in adults. It can make going to school, seeing friends and taking part in social activities more difficult. But there are a variety of treatments that can help, usually starting with a type of psychological ('talking') therapy. Early support and treatment for depression not only helps children and young people get back to living their lives, but also reduces the chance of problems continuing into adulthood.

We want this guideline to make a difference to children and young people with depression and their families or carers by making sure:

- healthcare professionals who see children and young people, for example, in schools, GP surgeries, community groups and care homes, know how to spot signs of depression and how to help
- a child or young person's assessment for depression covers not just their symptoms, but how these affect all areas of their life, including school, home and friendships
- healthcare professionals know which therapies to recommend first for mild, moderate and severe depression, and when to think about medication
- talking therapies are offered to fit individual needs – this could be online, one-to-one with a therapist, with a group or with the family.

## Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Healthcare professionals should give children, young people and their families or carers clear information, explain the different options and listen carefully to their views and concerns. They should also:

- work closely with children, young people and their families or carers, build trusting relationships and set joint goals for treatment
- think about a child or young person's age and stage of development when advising on treatments and support
- ask the young person about things that may have caused depression and anything that may affect treatment.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

## Where can I find out more?

The [NHS website](#) has more information about depression in children and young people.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Anna Freud, National Centre for Children and Families](#)
- [Mind](#)
- [Rethink Mental Illness](#)
- [STEM4](#)

For children and young people thinking about suicide (taking your own life), or anyone concerned about them:

- [PAPYRUS](#), HOPELINE UK 0800 068 41 41

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by depression as children and young people, and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

ISBN: 978-1-4731-3397-6