What’s Up with Feeling Down?

By Dennisse

We all know that life can be hard sometimes. Feeling blue or sad once in a while is normal, but how do you know when you should be concerned? Recently Nadja Reilly, PhD, staff psychologist in the Department of Psychiatry at Children’s Hospital Boston and an Instructor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, talked to the CYWH youth advisors about “teen depression.” We asked her the following questions:

Q - What are some warning signs of a depressed person?
A - Adolescents who are experiencing depression may exhibit the following symptoms: irritability, sadness, anxiety, difficulty eating or sleeping (too much or too little of either), decrease in academic performance, isolation from friends or family, feeling like they do not belong, thoughts of worthlessness or hopelessness, physical and emotional exhaustion. At the very extreme, a person suffering from depression may have thoughts of suicide.

Q - Is depression more likely to affect girls or guys?
A - Prior to puberty (approximately before age 12), boys and girls are equally likely to suffer from depression. However, after puberty, girls are twice as likely to suffer from depression.

Q - What are some of the major differences between depression in adolescents and depression in adults?
A - Adults who suffer from depression typically express sad mood. Adolescents more typically demonstrate irritability first. Adolescents also report feeling “different” from others, and may demonstrate more “at-risk” behaviors, such as using substances.

Q - What are some of the treatment options?
A - Different treatment options include: individual therapy, group therapy, family therapy, and use of medication along with the “talk therapy.”

Q - What should you do if someone tells you they are depressed?
A - There is no one right way to answer when someone tells you they are depressed. Start by seeking help from your family or friends, and then research what you can do to help. Remember to be patient and give them the space they need.

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Ask Nisi

Q - “Lately one of my guy friends is obsessed with counting calories. He doesn’t miss a day at the gym, even when he’s sick. Now he’s taking diet pills and sometimes he uses laxatives to lose weight. I’m worried—Can guys have eating disorders too? What should I do?”

A - Although guys are less likely to get an eating disorder, they can! In fact in recent years more and more young men are being diagnosed. It sounds like you have legitimate concerns about your friend. The first thing you should do is to talk to your friend, privately. Let him know that you are concerned. Next, listen to what he has to say. Be calm and supportive. If you continue to have concerns and your friend denies he has a problem, it’s time to talk to an adult such as your parents, his parents, a teacher or school counselor. It can definitely be frustrating if you are trying to help someone who doesn’t think they need it. Keep in mind that if left untreated, eating disorders can lead to serious health problems. Try not to mention your friend’s physical appearance, instead focus on his strengths such as his kind personality or his academic abilities. Tell your friend that you are there for him and you will do whatever it takes to get him treatment.

You heard it straight from the expert. Dr. Reilly gave us some great information about teen depression. Thank you Dr. Reilly! ♥


What’s your New Year’s resolution?

“I don’t believe in those. They’re just aren’t important to me.”

“Rahiem, 18 years old

“No drama, trying to stay away from altercations.”

“Kayla, 15 years old

6 Reasons to Visit the Young Women’s Resource Center

1. Prepare for tests; watch a video about colposcopy, acupuncture, endometriosis, breast exam and more!
2. Borrow books on: puberty, periods, eating disorders, nutrition and more!
3. Pick up free resources like our PCOS Resource Book, fitness guides, and more!
4. Use our computers and check out www.youngwomenshealth.org for teen friendly health guides and surf the net with our youth advisors to find other reliable health information.
5. Check out hundreds of pamphlets and information on our bulletin board about jobs, support groups, and teen programs.
6. Meet the amazing CYWH Youth Advisors; Paoli and Dennisse. ♥

www.youngwomenshealth.org

Winter Fitness

Don’t let the cold winter weather slow you down. Exercise helps to keep you healthy by lowering stress and increasing your energy. It also causes your body to release certain hormones called “endorphins” that make you feel good -- so exercising during the dreary winter months definitely has its benefits!

There are plenty of fun things to do around the Greater Boston area that are free or don’t cost a lot of money. Skating is a fun way to enjoy the winter weather and exercise at the same time. Check out MDC rinks in your community. You can exercise indoors too. Neighborhood YMCA’s, YWCA’s or local community centers have many indoor activities such as volleyball, basketball, swimming, dance, yoga, and more. So make a deal with yourself in 2008 to put down your video game controllers, take a break from the computer, turn off the TV, and fit exercise into your life.

Here are some useful links that will help you get started:
Community Centers in your neighborhood:
http://www.bostonyouthzone.com/afterschool/communitycenters
Skating rinks in Massachusetts:
www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/skating.htm
YMCA
www.ymcaboston.org

COMING SOON!
The 2nd edition of Quick and Easy Recipes for Teens Cookbook!