

Depression and Anxiety in Adolescents

In today's day and age, mental health is a large issue to all populations. Unfortunately, one group that is often forgotten in this discussion is children. Despite this lack of attention, mental health diagnoses in kids are at an all-time high. According to the National Survey of Children's Health, from the years of 2016-2020, diagnoses of anxiety and depression in kids increased by 27% and 24% respectively. This totals to about 1 in 11 children having anxiety, and 1 in 25 having depression.

Anxiety and depression manifest differently in adolescence than in adulthood. For anxiety, it's far less common for them to directly say that they're feeling anxious, as an adult might. Instead, they may have behavioral issues at school, or refuse to go altogether. Other signs can be headaches, abdominal pain, or shortness of breath. For depression, adolescents may have similar warning signs that adults do. However, some of these signs are more likely in kids than they are in adults. While adults most often show a loss of interest and difficulties with concentration, symptoms in children tend to lean toward changes in appetite, loss of energy, and changes in sleeping patterns. Additionally, the chance of attempting suicide is higher in teens with depression than in adults.

The causes of youth depression and anxiety, for the most part, are similar to the causes for adults. Brain chemistry, genetics, and trauma can all play major roles. However, in addition to this, the teen years are a time of great stress, and add many risk factors that can add to the likelihood of both conditions. These can include things like:

- Pressure to excel
- Developing other mental health conditions, such as bipolar disorder or ADHD
- Low self-esteem
- Social troubles or bullying

Additionally, those in minority groups can have a higher chance of depression and anxiety due to the stigma related to their identity. LGBTQ teens are particularly at risk of this. In 2022, The Trevor Project reported that 73% of LGBTQ youth reported symptoms of anxiety, while 58% reported experiencing symptoms of depression. As well, 45% seriously considered suicide in the prior year.

If you believe your child or student is suffering from depression or anxiety, do not turn a blind eye to it. There are resources available. Following the link below, you'll be taken to our webpage with a list of resources on mental health conditions in youth, including depression and anxiety.

<https://scipnebraska.com/resources/resources/mental-health.html>

References

<https://suicideprevention.nv.gov/Youth/Depression/>

<https://connect.uclahealth.org/2022/03/15/suicide-rate-highest-among-teens-and-young-adults/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CTeenagers%20and%20young%20adults%20have,and%20where%20they%20stand%20developmentally.%E2%80%9D>

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2022/#suicide-by-sexual-orientation>

<https://globalnews.ca/news/3632564/childhood-anxiety-how-its-different-from-adults-and-what-parents-need-to-know/>

<https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2022/03/24/research-update-childrens-anxiety-and-depression-on-the-rise/#:~:text=Even%20before%20the%20pandemic%2C%20anxiety,had%20been%20diagnosed%20with%20depression.>

<https://lindnercenterofhope.org/blog/adolescent-depression-different-from-depression-in-adults/>

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30243197/>