



DEPRESSION

- **DEPRESSION** is an illness that affects the whole body – thoughts, feelings, behavior and physical health.
- **DEPRESSION** affects 2% of children and 4% of youth.
- **DEPRESSION** affects all areas of a child's life – home, work, school, and social life.

CLINICAL SYMPTOMS	WHAT DOES A PARENT/CAREGIVER SEE?
Persistent Sad or Irritable Mood	Sadness; hopelessness or irritability; anger and aggression
Loss of Interest in Everyday Activities	Boredom; dropping activities; loss of interest in fun activities
Significant Change in Appetite Or Weight	Frequent unexplained physical complaints such as headaches, muscle aches and pains; stomach aches; change in weight; worries a lot
Difficulty Sleeping or Oversleeping Loss of Energy Difficulty Concentrating	Frequent absences from school; poor performance in school; unable to concentrate or stay focused; unfinished tests; consistently forgets homework; sleepy
Agitation or Slowing of Behavior	Restless; can't sit still; speech and behavior slowed; sluggish; feeling edgy
Feeling Worthless or Guilty	Talks of running away from home; overreacts to disappointment or failure; low self-esteem
Ongoing Thoughts of Death Or Suicide	Fear or preoccupation with dying; talking about people who have died

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES are treatments that have been shown through clinical research to produce positive outcomes for children and their families.

The most common effective treatment strategies for Depression are:

- **Cognitive Processing**
- **Psychoeducation**
- **Activity Selection**
- **Maintenance/Relapse Prevention**
- **Problem Solving**
- **Self-Monitoring**
- **Goal Setting**

FACT SHEET

Depression



**Federation of Families
of South Carolina**

A Voice for Children's Mental Health in SC

Depression treatment strategy descriptions:

Cognitive Processing

Cognitive processing is used to teach children about how the way they think about things can affect how they feel, and how they feel can affect how they behave. Cognitive methods might be used to help children understand how their thoughts are related to their moods and behaviors. They are taught strategies to help them check the accuracy of their thoughts and replace negative or unhelpful thoughts with more positive or helpful thoughts.

Psychoeducation

Psychoeducation is teaching children and their caretakers about their mental illness. The purpose is to help children and their families understand how the illness affects them, what kind of activities or treatment might help, and that there are others who have similar problems. This type of education helps them understand what will happen in the treatment sessions and how long the treatment might take. They will also learn what role the parent, the therapist, and the child will play in the treatment, and that they will be a team that will work on problems together.

Activity Selection

Activity selection is utilized to teach children the link between positive activities and feeling good. This strategy helps them to identify activities that they may have found enjoyable in the past and schedule regular times to participate in those activities outside of therapy. Children and caregivers learn over time that if they include a number of these activities in their daily schedules, they tend to feel better overall.

Maintenance/Relapse Prevention

Maintenance/relapse prevention includes exercises and training designed to consolidate skills the child has already developed and to anticipate future challenges that might arise after the termination or reduction of therapeutic services. The overall goal of maintenance/relapse prevention is to minimize the chance that gains made during the course of treatment will be lost in the future.

Problem-Solving

Children with mental illnesses often think their problems are too big to handle. Problem solving is a strategy that teaches a child how to clearly identify a problem, look at all possible solutions, and choose a solution. They also learn to evaluate their choices, and, if necessary, come up with different solutions. This strategy teaches children how to use problem solving in their day-to-day activities.



Self-Monitoring

Children with mental illness often need help identifying and labeling their feelings and emotions. Self-monitoring helps them to keep track of a specific feeling or behavior. They learn to develop a rating scale to measure these feelings. They might keep track of how sad or happy they are feeling, or they might keep track of how anxious or relaxed they are feeling. Learning to do this will help them understand what they can do to increase or decrease the ratings.

Goal-Setting

Goal setting involves the treatment team (child, therapist, and caretakers) working together to select a therapeutic goal. Once a goal is selected, plans are developed to achieve that goal. Goal setting often involves repeated assessment of how successful the treatment team is progressing to achieve the goal.