

# DEPRESSION CONVERSATION TOOLKIT



## STARTING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT DEPRESSION.

Depression is a common mental health condition that affects between 10–20% of teens and young adults in the United States. However, when you're feeling depressed, it can seem like no one understands or cares how you're feeling. But know that you're never alone and there's always hope. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE.** Up to 1 in every 5 teens and young adults will experience depression. Talking can help. If you think you may have depression, it's never too early to ask for help. Left untreated, depression can worsen and lead to more serious problems. Talking to just one trusted person is a simple way to start understanding what you're going through and getting the help you deserve.

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**WARNING SIGNS OF DEPRESSION.** Everyone experiences feelings of sadness now and then, especially at a young age. However, if the feelings last for more than two weeks, then they could be signs of depression.

**Ask yourself the following questions. If you say "yes" to even a few of them, then it's a good idea to talk to someone.**

YES  NO // Do I feel down, depressed, or hopeless?

YES  NO // Have I lost interest in my favorite activities?

YES  NO // Would I rather be by myself than with friends and family?

YES  NO // Do I feel tired for no reason?

YES  NO // Have my eating habits changed—either no appetite or overeating?

YES  NO // Do I have problems concentrating at school or work?

YES  NO // Have I had problems sleeping?

YES  NO // Have I recently gone through a stressful event like a break up?

YES  NO // Have friends or family members been asking me, "Are you OK?"

YES  NO // Have I thought about hurting myself or killing myself?

## HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT PERSON TO TALK TO.

No matter how alone or isolated you feel, there is always someone that is ready and willing to help. If you don't feel ready to talk to a mental health professional, that's perfectly fine. Start by telling one trusted person you feel comfortable with and you know will be a good listener.

### YOUR TRUSTED PERSON MAY BE A:

FAMILY MEMBER

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

TEACHER

CHURCH LEADER

COACH

CLOSE FRIEND

**HOW TO START THE CONVERSION.** There's no right or wrong way to tell someone that you feel depressed. But there are steps you can take to make the conversation easier to start and more productive.

**FIND A COMFORTABLE PLACE AND TIME.** This could be a coffee shop, school, home, or anywhere that you can have some privacy away from distractions.

**PLAN WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY.** Write down how you're feeling or practice the conversation in front of a mirror.

**BE READY FOR QUESTIONS.** The person you're talking to will probably want more information on your situation. Be honest and share as much as you feel comfortable.

**DON'T RUSH THE CONVERSATION.** This topic may be challenging for the person you're talking to, so give them time to listen and process what you're saying.

**DON'T TRY TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM ALL AT ONCE.** Remember, this is just the start of the process.

**BE PROUD.** It takes courage to tell someone how you feel.

### WHAT YOU CAN SAY:

"I don't feel right and don't know what to do."

"This is hard for me to talk about, but I think I may have depression."

"I'm worried about how I feel about myself."

"I've been feeling depressed for a while now. I think I may need help."

**WHAT TO DO AFTER THE CONVERSATION.** Hopefully after your first conversation, you'll feel a sense of relief and hopefulness. Be sure to keep things moving in a positive direction.

**1 Stay in touch** with your trusted person and keep him or her updated on how you feel.

**2** If the first conversation didn't go the way you had hoped, **don't worry or give up.** Try finding another trusted person that may be better suited to help.

**3 Make healthy lifestyle choices** such as diet, exercise, and sleep.

**4** If you're ready to take the next step to receive a diagnosis and treatment, **talk to a mental health professional or organization.**

Visit [JustTellOne.org](https://www.JustTellOne.org) or call 716.245.6JT1 to find available services in your area.



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