

# understanding depression



## WHAT IS IT?

- Depression is more than just being sad or unhappy. It is a medical disorder (like heart disease, diabetes etc.) and can affect a young person's thoughts, feelings, physical health, and behaviour.
- Young people with depression may have a hard time coping with everyday responsibilities and activities, have difficulty getting along with others, and experience low self-esteem.
- Depression is common. Researchers believe that about 1 in 5 children and youth will go through a depression by the time they turn 18. Studies also tell us that at any one moment, between 4 and 8 out of every 100 children and youth are having a major depression.

## HOW DO YOU KNOW?

**The main symptom of depression is a despairing and/or irritable mood that:**

- is present daily
- lasts longer than 2 weeks
- impacts performance at school or work
- interferes with a young person's enjoyment of life or their ability to function

**Other possible symptoms:**

- feeling hopeless and worthless
- sleep problems
- loss of pleasure/interest in usual activities
- changes in appetite and weight
- loss of energy
- feeling irritable
- withdrawal from family and friends
- alcohol or substance abuse
- reckless behaviour
- thoughts about death or suicide

## WHAT DO I DO?

It is very important that parents, other caregivers, and teachers are aware of the symptoms of depression in young people and take them seriously. There are different resources available in the community to support youth with depression:

### **Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario & Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre – Centralized Mental Health Intake Office:**

*Intake services for mental health assessment & treatment, (referrals need to be initiated by the family physician or pediatrician), 1-866-737-2496 | [www.cheo.on.ca](http://www.cheo.on.ca)*

### **Youth Net/Réseau Ado:**

*mental health promotion/early intervention program for youth by youth,*

**613.238.3311 | [www.youthnet.on.ca](http://www.youthnet.on.ca)**

### **Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa:**

*support available with a counselor who specializes in working with youth and their families,*

**613.562.3004** or after hours **613.260.2360 | 1.877.377.7775 | [www.ysb.on.ca](http://www.ysb.on.ca)**

*\*If you are concerned about a youth's immediate safety call 9-1-1 or, if you can safely do so, take them to the closest hospital's emergency department*

For further information please visit

**[www.ementalhealth.ca](http://www.ementalhealth.ca) | [www.mooddisorders.on.ca](http://www.mooddisorders.on.ca)**



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*Funding provided by Justice Canada*