

# Serving Students with Depression: *Implications for School Counselors*

## Webinar One: Signs of Depression and Identification

Presented by: Dr. Peg Donohue and Dr. Emily Goodman-Scott

### KEY TAKE-AWAYS:

- **Based on the DSM-V, depression is:**
  - Depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day. Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities most of the day, nearly every day. Significant weight loss when not dieting or weight gain, or decrease or increase in appetite nearly every day.
  
- **Depression in youth *can* present as:**
  - Indecision, lack of concentration, forgetfulness
  - Changes in eating and/or sleeping habits
  - Withdrawal from friends or activities they once enjoyed
  - Lack of enthusiasm, energy, or motivation
  - Persistent sadness over one full year
  - Frequent physical complaints such as headaches or stomach aches
  - Significant problems with adults or caregivers
  - Missing school or poor school performance
  - Thoughts of death or suicidal ideation
  - Self-mutilation
  - Drug and or alcohol use/abuse
  - Poor self-esteem, shame or guilt
  
- **Common roots of childhood depression *can* be:**
  - Medical issues
  - Family history
  - Death/Transitions/Losses
  - Stress: good and bad change
  - Parents' separation/divorce
  - Bullying
  - Conflicts with friends
  - School stress
  
- **Which students can be at a greater risk for experiencing signs of depression? Descriptors below:**
  - History of trauma, loss, and unresolved grief
  - Societal-level traumas: natural disasters, COVID-19, etc.
  - Relative who has attempted or completed suicide
  - Relative who has significant anxiety or other mental health concerns
  - Students with disabilities
  - LGBTQ+
  - Homeless/Transient
  - Military-connected
  - Chronic health problems
  - Extreme poverty and wealth
  - Living in communities with high crime and incarceration
  - Family violence/conflict
  - High-performing/perfectionism

- Foster care experience
- Family change (divorce, deployment, incarceration, move, etc.)
- **According to ASCA’s mental health position statement (2020):**
  - “School counselors recognize and respond to the need for mental health services that promote social/emotional wellness and development for all students.... School counselors **advocate for the mental health needs of all students** by offering instruction that enhances **awareness of mental health, appraisal and advisement addressing academic, career and social/emotional development; short-term counseling interventions; and referrals to community resources** for long-term support.”
  - Important to note, the importance of: **collaboration with, and education and awareness for teachers/staff/administrators, families, and community members.**

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What is depression?
- What are contributing factors to depression?
- Who is at risk for depression?
- How can depression present differently by developmental level?
- How can depression present differently based on culture?
- What are K-12 services for students with depression?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

### [TIER ONE EVIDENCE BASED BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMS](#)

#### **Describing Depression**

- [Depression and Suicide in Virginia](#)
- [American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry](#)
- [Kid's Health](#)
- [Depression Resources](#), Child Mind Institute
- [Information about Treatment](#), Child Mind Institute
- [What do Kids Feel Sad About \(Slide Show\)](#)
- [Video, Signs of depression in teens](#)
- [Video, “Decoding Depression”](#) (Harvard Medical School)

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