

# Teen Depression and the FiC Encourager

# Common Signs of Adolescent Depression

## **Emotional changes**

- Feelings of sadness, which can include crying spells for no apparent reason
- Frustration or feelings of anger, even over small matters
- Feeling hopeless or empty
- Irritable or annoyed mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities
- Loss of interest in, or conflict with, family and friends
- Low self-esteem
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Fixation on past failures or exaggerated self-blame or self-criticism
- Extreme sensitivity to rejection or failure, and the need for excessive reassurance
- Trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions and remembering things
- Ongoing sense that life and the future are grim and bleak
- Frequent thoughts of death, dying or suicide

# Common Signs of Adolescent Depression

## **Behavioral changes**

- Tiredness and loss of energy
- Insomnia or sleeping too much
- Changes in appetite — decreased appetite and weight loss, or increased cravings for food and weight gain
- Use of alcohol or drugs
- Agitation or restlessness — for example, pacing, hand-wringing or an inability to sit still
- Slowed thinking, speaking or body movements
- Frequent complaints of unexplained body aches and headaches, which may include frequent visits to the school nurse
- Social isolation
- Poor school performance or frequent absences from school
- Less attention to personal hygiene or appearance
- Angry outbursts, disruptive or risky behavior, or other acting-out behaviors
- Self-harm — for example, cutting, burning, or excessive piercing or tattooing
- Making a suicide plan or a suicide attempt

# Pre-Pandemic Stats on U.S. Teen Depression

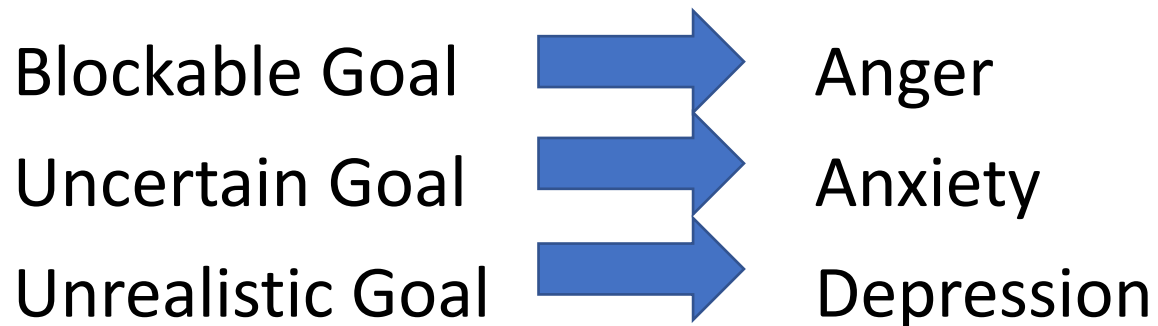
3.1

MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE AGES  
12-17 DEAL WITH PERIODS OF  
MAJOR DEPRESSION.<sup>1</sup>

78%

OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 11-17 WHO TOOK  
MHA'S DEPRESSION SCREEN SCORED POSITIVE  
FOR MODERATE TO SEVERE DEPRESSION.<sup>2</sup>

# Freedom in Christ Ministries



Depression is different than Sadness in that \_\_\_\_\_

Working definition of Depression – A deficiency of hope.

# Combatting Depression

Recovery -- Encouragement

Prevention -- Exhortation

Most biblical approaches are solely informational and propositional.

E.g. If you will listen and look to God's Word

If you will trust/believe God's Word

If you will do God's Word

Then you will be well. You will recover and be resilient.

# The Problem with Traditional Biblical Approaches to Teen Depression

Problem#1 – Adolescent Neurological Limitations

Problem #2 – Systemic Issues

Problem #3 – DNA/Predispositions

# A Strategy (Biblical and Psychological) for Encouraging Distraught Teens

Attunement – The desire and ability to respect and relate to the inner world of another person.

Empathy

Assurance

Assistance



# A Strategy (Biblical and Psychological) for Encouraging Distraught Teens

Attunement in the Scriptures:

Genesis 16: 1 – 13. *Hagar and El Roi*

2 Corinthians 1: 3-7

# A Strategy (Biblical and Psychological) for Encouraging Distraught Teens

Attunement – Empathy, Assurance, Assistance

- I see you
- I hear you
- I understand this is hard for you
- I'm glad to be here for you
- We'll walk this out together