Chapter VII.

Educational Materials for Adolescents

Guide to the “Educational Materials” Section

Depression Information

Childhood Depression

Medication Information

Antidepressant Medication and YOU (12-21)

Antidepressant Medication and YOU (Ages 10-12)

Patient Handout on Psychological Counseling for Depression

Self-Management

Self-Care Success

Monitoring Sheet for Depression

Depression Medication and Side Effects

Mental Health and Drugs and Alcohol

How Can You Help with Sleep Problems

Suicide: What Should I Know?
Guide to the “Educational Materials for Adolescents” Section

Included in this section are a number of information sheets as well as self-management tools to give to your patients if they have been identified as having depression. There is no need to overwhelm your patients with paper. Try to choose the materials that are appropriate for them.

**Depression Information**: Included is a very simply worded information sheet on depression that can help explain the disorder directly to your patients. FOR OLDER TEENS, USE THE NAMI GUIDE IN THE NEXT SECTION.

**Medication Information**: Included are two versions of an information sheet on antidepressants for those patients for whom you are considering medication or for whom you think the psychiatrist will consider medication. Choose the one appropriate to the developmental level of your patient.

**Psychological Counseling Information**: This is a very brief form that explains therapy in general.

**Self-Management**: These materials help patients participate in their own treatment by either setting goals or being alert to important signs and symptoms.

- **Self-Care Success**: It is preferred that you set these goals together with the patient.
- **Monitoring Sheet for Depression**: Decide how you would like your patient to use this sheet and whether you, your nurse, or a mental health professional will be the point of contact.
- **Depression Medication and Side Effects**: Decide how you would like your patient to use this sheet and whether you, your nurse, or a mental health professional will be the point of contact and whether this will involve phone or in-person communication.
- **Mental Health and Drugs and Alcohol**: This information sheet may help your patient stay away from self-medicating themselves with drugs and alcohol.
- **How Can You Help with Sleep Problems**: This sheet can empower your patients by teaching proper sleep hygiene.
- **Suicide: What Should I Know**: This sheet teaches teens about suicide warning signs and how to ask for help.
## Checklist of Educational Materials for Adolescents

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Handout</th>
<th>Date Provided</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Depression Information</td>
<td>Childhood Depression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medication Information</td>
<td>Antidepressant Medication and YOU (12-21)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Psychological Counseling</td>
<td>Patient Handout on Psychological Counseling</td>
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<td>Suicide: What Should I Know?</td>
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</table>
**Checklist of Educational Materials for Parents**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Handout</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAMI’s “A Family Guide”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Support Action Plan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>How Can You Help with Sleep Problems</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Depression and the Family</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Childhood Depression

**Why am I going to the doctor?**

You’re going to the doctor because you have an illness called depression.

**What does depression mean?**

Some of the problems a child with depression may have are:

- Feeling sad most of the time
- Feeling mad and grumpy most of the time
- Wanting to be by yourself most of the time
- Not wanting your favorite foods any more OR eating too much just to feel better
- Getting a lot thinner or fatter
- Having a lot of stomach aches and headaches
- Not wanting to play with your favorite toys or friends
- Wanting to die or go away for forever
- Having trouble falling asleep at night or not wanting to get up in the morning
- Worrying a lot or feeling afraid that bad things will happen

**Why am I depressed?**

- Your brain controls your feelings.
- Sometimes you’re happy, sad, angry, excited or worried; that’s normal.
- But when you’re sad most of the time, your brain isn’t working right.
- Depression is not your fault

**What will the doctor do?**

- The doctor will ask you and your family special questions about your feelings.
- The doctor will talk to you about how fast you will get better.
- The doctor will want you to come back to talk about your feelings and how your medicine is working.

**With help, you can feel better again!**

Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
Revised 02-27-04
G3IP
Antidepressant Medication and YOU

How do the medications work?
The brain uses chemical messengers, called neurotransmitters, to send signals to different parts of the brain and the body. In young people with depression, certain neurotransmitters may not be working the right way. The antidepressant medications help these neurotransmitters work better. Different antidepressant medications work on different neurotransmitters. That is why sometimes one medication will work better than another, and sometimes more than one medication will need to be tried before finding the one that works best for you. Also, new medications and treatments are being developed and tested all the time.

How will medication help me?
Antidepressant medications may help you have:
- Improved mood
- Better concentration
- More normal appetite
- More normal sleeping
- Greater interest in activities
- More energy
- Improved self-esteem

Will taking medication change who I am?
You may be concerned about taking medication. You may think that it will make you different from other young people or that it will change who you are. These things aren’t true. Medication will help you get back to the way you were before you became depressed, so you feel like yourself again. Taking medication is really no different than using glasses or wearing braces—it’s only a tool to help you.

What are the problems with taking medications?
Like all medical treatments, there can be side effects with these medications. Side effects are usually very mild and tend to disappear as you continue to take the medication or as the dose is changed. Sometimes the side effects may continue, and this usually means that the doctor will change the medication. Some common side effects are:
- difficulty sleeping
- headaches
- irritability
- upset stomach
- dry mouth
- blurry vision

Specific side effects can be found in the individual medication information sheets. Make sure you tell your doctor if you experience any side effects. Your doctor may change the dose or switch to another medication.

How long will I have to take medication?
If the medication is helpful and you have no problems with it, you will probably continue to take the medication for a number of months, even after you feel better, to make sure the depression is gone. If your doctor decides to stop the medication, it will be slowly decreased over a number of weeks. Antidepressant medication should never be stopped without first talking to your doctor. Sometimes young people who have been depressed will become depressed again, so it is important to notice if your symptoms return. If you do become depressed again, you will probably be restarted on medication.

What is my role in taking medication for depression?
It is your responsibility to take your medication in the right amount at the right time. You should not take any other medication (even over-the-counter) without talking to your doctor first. And you should never use alcohol or drugs while taking medication; it is very dangerous and can be deadly. It is also your responsibility to never share your medication with anyone else. It can be harmful, and it is illegal. Most importantly, you should talk openly with your doctor about any problems and work together as a team in making decisions about medications.
Antidepressant Medication and YOU

How will the medication help me?

When you take medication for depression, it works in your brain to help you:

- Be less sad
- Like doing things again
- Feel less grouchy
- Sleep and eat better

How does the doctor know that the medication is working?

Your doctor will talk with you, your family and your teacher to know if the medication is working right. He may need to change the amount or kind of medication you get to make sure it works the best for you.

Will the medication make me feel bad?

Probably not, but sometimes medications can cause side effects, which can make you feel strange. Some side effects are:

- Trouble falling asleep
- Stomach ache
- Headaches
- Blurry vision
- Feeling thirsty a lot

If you notice any of these or if you are having any other problems, tell your parents and doctor. Most of the time side effects are not serious and will go away.

What is my role?

- Learn what medication you are taking, how much to take, and what it is for.
- It's very important to take your medication when your mom, dad or teacher tells you.
- You should help remember when to take your medication.
- Even if you feel okay, you need to take your medication every day.
- You should never share your medication with anyone else. It can be dangerous and it's against the law.
Patient Handout
Psychological Counseling for Depression

Quick Facts About Psychological Counseling/Psychotherapy
In psychological counseling, youth with depression work with a qualified mental health care specialist who listens to them, talks, and helps them correct overly negative thinking and improve their relationships with others.

Treating Depression with Psychological Counseling/Psychotherapy
Psychological counseling has been shown to be effective in treating many youth with depression. Psychological counseling can be done individually (with only you and a mental health specialist) or in a group (with you, a mental health specialist, and other youth with similar problems). More than half of the people with mild to moderate depression respond well to psychological counseling. While the length of time that persons are involved in counseling differs, people with depression can typically expect to attend a weekly hour-long counseling session for 8-20 weeks. If your depression is not noticeably improved after six to twelve weeks of counseling, this usually means that you need to try a different treatment for your depression. Psychological counseling by itself is not recommended as the only treatment for people whose depression is more severe. Medication is needed for this type of depression, and it can be taken in combination with psychological counseling.

What Can You Do to Help Your Clinician Most Effectively Treat Your Depression with Psychological Counseling?
Keep all of your appointments with the mental health specialist.
Be honest and open and ask questions.
Work cooperatively with the mental health specialist (eg complete tasks assigned to you as part of the therapy).
Keep appointments with your primary care clinician and tell him/her how the therapy is working (eg whether your depression is getting better or worse).

Adapted with permission by GLAD-PC from Rost K. Training Primary Care Nurses to Improve Depression Treatment. NIMH grant MH54444
# Self-Care Success!

**Things you can do to help yourself.**

Name: _______________________ Date: __________

**Instructions:** When people are depressed they often forget to take care of themselves. By setting self-care goals you can take an active role in helping yourself feel better more quickly. Choose one or two of the areas below and set a goal. Make sure the goal is clear and reasonable. In the space below the boxes rate how likely you are to follow through on the goal(s) you set. If you are not very sure you can follow through on your goal you may want to find alternatives or make some adjustments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stay Physically Active</th>
<th>Schedule Pleasant Activities</th>
<th>Eat Balanced Meals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each week during the next month I will spend at least ___ days doing the following physical activity for ____ minutes. ____________________________________________________________ (Pick a specific date and time and make it reasonable!)</td>
<td>Even though I may not feel motivated I will commit to scheduling ____ fun activities each week for the next month. They are ____________________________________________________________ (Specify when and with whom.)</td>
<td>Even if I don’t feel like it, I will eat ___ balanced meals per day to include ____________________________________________________________ (Choose healthy foods.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spend Time Relating</th>
<th>Spend Time with People Who Support You</th>
<th>Small Goals &amp; Simple Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During the next month I will spend at least ___ days for at least ___ minutes at a time with: ____________________________________________ doing: ________________ doing: ________________ ____________________________________________ doing: ________________ doing: ________________ (Who?) (What?) (eg talking, eating, playing)</td>
<td>Each week I will spend at least ___ days relaxing for ___ minutes by participating in the following activities: ________________ (eg reading, writing in a journal, deep breathing, muscle relaxation)</td>
<td>The problem is: ____________________________________________ My goal is: ____________________________________________ Step 1: ____________________________________________ Step 2: ____________________________________________ Step 3: ____________________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How likely are you to follow through with these activities prior to your next visit?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Likely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What might get in the way of your completing these activities prior to your next visit?**

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

**Solution(s) to the above barriers**

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

### Monitoring Sheet

#### Depression

**SYMPTOMS**

For each symptom, circle the number describing how much of a problem it was this week.

1 = Not a Problem  
3 = Somewhat a Problem  
5 = Severe Problem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Rating (1-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling sad all day</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling grouchy or irritable</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling restless or slowed down</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to think or concentrate</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigger or smaller appetite</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interest in favorite activities</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No energy</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sleeping or sleeping too much</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling guilty or worthless</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking about death or suicide</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other:**

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**⭐⭐ Good Job ⭐⭐

Things I (my child/teen) did well this week:

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DEPRESSION

MEDICATIONS
These are the medications to take:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Take When?</th>
<th>How Much?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Mid-Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Mid-Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Mid-Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>Mid-Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SIDE EFFECTS
For each side effect, circle the number that describes how much of a problem it was this week.
1 = Not a Problem  3 = Somewhat a Problem  5 = Severe Problem

Trouble falling asleep: 1 2 3 4 5
Upset stomach: 1 2 3 4 5

Headaches: 1 2 3 4 5
Trouble with eyes: 1 2 3 4 5

Feeling thirsty a lot: 1 2 3 4 5
Feeling restless: 1 2 3 4 5

Other: ____________________________
MENTAL HEALTH AND DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

- Individuals with a mental health problem are at a much higher risk for problems with alcohol or drugs.

- Sometimes children or teens will choose to use alcohol or drugs to “escape” from problems, stress, or difficult emotions they may be experiencing. However, alcohol and drugs can imitate the symptoms of mental illness, causing depressed mood, anxiety, irritability or moodiness, loss of appetite, sleeplessness, suspiciousness, and even hallucinations.

- The use of alcohol or drugs can make it difficult to diagnose a mental health problem or tell if a problem is getting better. It can be difficult to separate what problems are caused by the alcohol or drug use and what is caused by the mental health problem.

- Medications prescribed by a psychiatrist can be abused, just like illegal drugs, if taken differently than prescribed. Be sure you (or your child/adolescent) are taking the medications as your doctor has recommended. Don’t allow anyone else to take the medications. Giving or selling your prescribed medications can be against the law.

- Most psychiatric medications (as well as other medications) should not be mixed with alcohol or drugs. Taking both can cause the psychiatric medication to be ineffective, new symptoms or side effects to arise, and even serious physical harm and death.

- Some people worry that taking a stimulant for ADHD may make a person more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol. Actually, research suggests that children with ADHD who are treated with medication are less likely than those not treated to have substance abuse problems later in life.

For more information or help with alcohol or drug problems:

**Alcoholics Anonymous**  
AA General Service Office  
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org  
212-670-3400

**Narcotics Anonymous**  
World Service Office  
www.na.org  
818-773-9999.

**Alanon/Alateen**  
Family Group Headquarters, Inc.  
www.al-anon.alateen.org  
1-888-4AL-ANON

**National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information**  
www.health.org  
1-800-729-6686
How Can You Help with Sleep Problems

All of us need enough sleep to function well during the day. Having just one night of poor sleep can make it more difficult to pay attention to our school or work, make us sleepy throughout the day, cause us to make poor decisions, and leave us feeling irritable, grouchy, slowed down or restless. When many nights of little sleep add up, getting through the day can become a losing battle!

Sleep problems frequently occur as a part of depression. In fact, sleeping problems, either sleeping too much or having difficulty sleeping enough, are one of the symptoms of major depression. Although some sleep problems may require medication to get better, there are things YOU can do to help improve your sleep. By improving your sleep hygiene (your sleep habits), you can get rid of any habits that are making it harder for you to get a good night’s rest.

1. Keep a regular sleep schedule. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. It can take your body several days to weeks to adjust to a new sleep schedule, so staying up late on weekends and sleeping in really leaves your body confused.

2. Watch what you eat and drink near bedtime. Food or drinks with caffeine (e.g. sodas, tea, chocolate) can keep you up. Avoid eating big meals or being hungry before bedtime. Some people find milk or milk drinks (e.g. Ovaltine) to be helpful in falling asleep. Milk contains tryptophan, which causes sleepiness.

3. Eliminate bad habits. Drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes both prevent you from getting a good night's sleep.

4. Make sure your bedroom is set up for sleep. Try to make sure the temperature of the room is comfortable, there are few noises, and the room is dark.

5. Exercise regularly. Getting vigorous exercise during the afternoon (but 4-6 hours before bedtime) has been found to result in better sleep.

6. Get outside and see the sun. Sunlight helps the body control its biological clock. This clock lets us know when to feel sleepy and when to be alert.

7. Use your bed only for rest or sleep. Don’t watch TV or do homework in bed.

8. If you don’t fall asleep within 10 or 15 minutes, get out of bed. Do a quiet, dull activity until you are feeling sleepy and try again.

9. Find a relaxing activity to do before bed. A warm bath, quiet music, and/or talking with a friend can all help you make the change from daytime to nighttime. Find what works best for you.
Suicide: What Should I Know?

Why am I having these thoughts?

Many young people with depression think about hurting or killing themselves at some time. In fact, thoughts about death and dying are one of the symptoms of depression. Just like depression is treatable if you recognize it and get help, these feelings and thoughts can be treated and you can feel better. But it is up to you to let people know when you are feeling very depressed or out of control and it is up to you to let people help you through this time.

What are the warning signs?

Learn to recognize your own warning signs. Everybody is different and the things you notice when you begin to feel very depressed may be different from those other people report. But here is a list of some things that may signal a problem:

- Feeling very hopeless, like nothing will ever get better
- Not wanting to be around friends or family or take part in fun activities
- Not caring about anything anymore, like school or how you look
- Drinking or using drugs
- Doing risky things, such as driving recklessly or getting into fights
- Having lots of thoughts or dreams about death and dying
- Having a lot of stresses or life changes that seem hard to handle
- Feeling like you have a little more energy than usual

What can I do?

If you feel like things are getting out of control, you need to let someone know. Talk to your parents, your doctor, teacher, counselor, or a good friend! Don't keep these feelings inside... There are things you can do to help yourself get through these tough times. Don't be afraid to ask others to help you do these things as well.

- Keep your doctor or counselor informed about symptoms. Get symptoms treated early before they become worse.
- Keep in regular contact with someone on your treatment team. Set up a weekly (or even daily) time to check in with them and let them know how you are doing.
- Do what you can to reduce stresses. Learn what stressors are likely to really bother you and try to manage those first.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs. They may make you feel better temporarily but they will eventually make your depression and suicidal feelings worse.
- Let your parents have responsibility for giving you your medications and keeping all medications in a safe place.
- Develop a plan with others about what you will do if you feel suicidal. Carry phone numbers of people you can contact and who will stay with you until you are safe.
- Always try to find something to look forward to.

Suicide is a serious subject. Although it can be difficult, talking about it is an important step to getting better. By letting people know when you are thinking about death or hurting yourself, you can begin to get the help you need.

PEOPLE CAN AND DO GET BETTER!

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Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
A-DEP