



## DEPRESSION

Sometimes depression occurs in the context of stress caused by many of the issues mentioned above.

However, depression does not always occur in response to a specific stressor or traumatic event. Many children experience depression even though they cannot identify ANYTHING that they are upset about. Depression can often be biochemical, meaning that it is due to biochemical issues in the brain, NOT due to a specific event or situation.

Depression does not always present with sadness or crying. In children especially, presenting signs of depression may well be physical complaints like headache, stomach ache, insomnia, fatigue, or behavioral issues such as social withdrawal, school avoidance, changes on academic performance, and behavioral issues at home and at school.

Most children with depression do not need medication. If we refer you to a mental health provider, it is rarely because we feel that medication is necessary. It is because we feel that sessions with a personal counselor will be beneficial to your child and to you.

You should not expect that your child will be happy about going to a counselor. He/she will most likely resist going and insist that going is not helpful. However, you should plan to attend at least 6 sessions before you decide whether or not it is beneficial.

How can we help children with depression?

- Be honest with children about family problems, but make it clear that it is not their responsibility to solve adult problems
- Minimize children's involvement in parental conflicts.
- Make sure that children feel comfortable in talking to you about any stressors they might be experiencing
- Make sure that they understand that feelings of depression are not unusual and that talking about them WILL help.
- Encourage their use of stress-relief activities mentioned above
- Access professional assistance when symptoms are persistent, and then be supportive of the required therapy.

For more information about depression in children, go to <http://www.webmd.com/depression/guide/depression-children?page=3>