

From the Prevention Counselor:

In the past few weeks mental health has been a large topic of conversation in the media as well as among each other. While this space cannot hold an exhaustive article about teen depression, I thought it might be helpful to identify some of the symptoms for parents to be aware of. We all have our good days and our bad days but a diagnosis of depression suggests more than a few days of feeling sad. To be called depressed by doctors or counselors a person is usually experiencing a significant change in mood for more than a few weeks. Along with the change in mood would be a difficulty to maintain or complete tasks of daily life. Things to look for in a teen that might suggest depression are:

Lack of caring or interest about things the teen used to enjoy

Significant changes in eating or sleeping

Drop in grades

Poor hygiene

Significant changes in activity level of teen

Feeling of guilt, anxiety, irritability or even hopelessness

Poor concentration and/or difficulty making decisions

Use of substances to feel better

Withdrawal from friends or activities

It is important to know that when talking about depression we always want to look at the big picture for a teen. It is not a question of if you can find one or two things from this list but rather a question of are there several of these changes and how much are they affecting your teen's ability to live the life they used to live and used to want to live. If you have any questions or concerns about your teen's mood or behavioral changes feel free to contact myself at mweed@skanschools.org or your child's guidance counselor. For more information on teen depression check out websites like WebMD or teenshealth.org and search with term "teen depression."