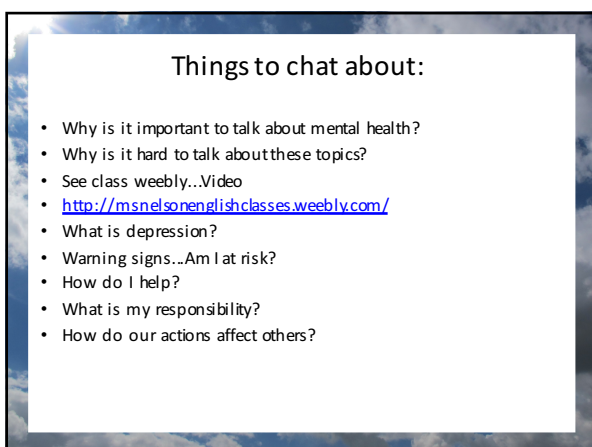
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What is depression?

- Disturbance in someone's mood (a feeling of sadness, a lack of physical and emotional energy, and a loss of interest in things that used to bring pleasure).
- One of the most common emotional problems and one of the most treatable.
- Most experience a form of depression at some point in their lives
- Chemical imbalance
- Positive and negative thinking
- Over time
- Differing causes: difficult life events, negative living & social environments, personality types, physical illness, medications, biochemical factors, genetics, alcohol and drug abuse.
- Usually more than one factor plays into a person's depression.

What are the symptoms?

- Some are very clear, and some are confusing. Each person's symptoms and experience with depression may be different from everyone else's. Learning to recognize your own symptoms can help you prevent and manage depression.

Signs and symptoms of teen depression

It's hard to put into words how depression feels, and people experience it differently. There are, however, some common problems and symptoms that teens with depression experience.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You constantly feel irritable, sad, or angry. • Nothing seems fun anymore, and you just don't see the point of trying. • You feel bad about yourself—worthless, guilty, or just "wrong" in some way • You sleep too much or not enough. • You have frequent, unexplained headaches or other physical problems. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anything and everything makes you cry. • You've gained or lost weight without consciously trying to. • You just can't concentrate. Your grades may be plummeting because of it. • You feel helpless and hopeless. • You're thinking about death or suicide. (If this is true, talk to someone right away!) |
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How do I help?

Helping a depressed friend

Depressed teens typically rely on their friends more than their parents or other adults in their lives, so you may find yourself in the position of being the first—or only—person that they talk to about their feelings. While this might seem like a huge responsibility, there are many things you can do to help.

- **Get your friend to talk to you.** Starting a conversation about depression can be daunting, but you can say something simple: "You seem like you are really down, and not yourself. I really want to help you. Is there anything I can do?"
- **Know that your friend doesn't expect you to have the answers.** Your friend probably just needs someone to listen and be supportive. By listening and responding in a non-judgmental and reassuring manner, you are helping in a major way.
- **Encourage your friend to get help.** Urge your depressed friend to talk to a parent, teacher, or counselor. It might be scary for your friend to admit to an authority figure that there is a problem. Having you there might help, so offer to go along for support.
- **Stick with your friend through the hard times.** Depression can make people do and say things that are hurtful or strange. But your friend is going through a very difficult time, so try not to take it personally. Once your friend gets help, he or she will go back to being the person you know and love. In the meantime, make sure you have other friends or family taking care of you. Your feelings are important and need to be respected, too.
- **Speak up if your friend is suicidal.** If your friend is joking or talking about suicide, giving possessions away, or saying goodbye, tell a trusted adult immediately. Your only responsibility at this point is to get your friend help, and get it fast. Even if you promised not to tell, your friend needs your help. It's better to have a friend who is temporarily angry at you than one who is no longer alive.

What is my responsibility?

- Isolation vs. connectedness

Counseling option:

- Help you understand why you feel what you feel
- Gives different strategies on how to deal with situations differently
- Offer support
- Teach coping skills
- Sharing your feelings in a group setting can help so you know you are not alone.
- Think about the consequences—it doesn't matter what the reason is.

Consider this...

