

Tips for Working with Families, Schools, and the Medical/Mental Health Community

Working with Families

- Understand the symptoms associated with depression
- Understand the importance of taking medication properly, if prescribed
- Understand the importance of keeping therapy appointments
- Understand that it is not helpful to “blame” the child for symptoms associated with depression
- Understand that “just pulling yourself out of the depression” is not possible for children and adolescents who are depressed
- Communicate with the child/adolescent’s school (i.e., Student Assistance Team, guidance)
- Advocate for the child or adolescent with schools and the medical/mental health community
- Provide support, understanding, and hope
- Offer the opportunity for and encourage physical activity to raise serotonin levels
- Reduce stress levels in the child/adolescent’s life
- Help child/adolescent to break tasks into small, more manageable chunks

Working with Schools

- Link child/adolescent to school guidance counselors, small group support groups, and Student Assistance Programs/Instructional Support Teams
- Support parental communication with child/adolescent’s teachers on issues related to lower school performance
- Link child/adolescent to school mentors, if available
- Link child/adolescent to peer buddy system, if available

Working with the Medical/Mental Health Community

- Initial screening can sometimes occur with primary care physician, if reluctant to see a mental health specialist
- Promote regular medication checks, if medication is prescribed
- Explore the need to investigate underlying loss issues that may have triggered depression