

# *Depression Intervention Tip Sheet*

## **Impact of Depression on Learning and Everyday Functioning**

Sad or unhappy mood  
 Loss of interest or pleasure  
 Gets “stuck” in negative thoughts  
 Increased worry or fear  
 Delayed mental reasoning  
 May abuse drugs and alcohol  
 Inability to follow-through

Difficulty sustaining attention and focus  
 Feelings of hopelessness  
 Projects an “I don’t care” attitude  
 Physical signs of bodily abuse  
 Slow movement, speech and thinking  
 Sleeping problems (excessive or insomnia)  
 Anhedonia (loss of interest in activities)

### **Interventions for Home**

<b>Interventions</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Ask child to repeat instructions.	“Please tell me what you heard.”
Break tasks into smaller segments.	”See if you can think of at least one example.”
Give child time for problem-solving.	“Take as long as you need.”
Demonstrate empathy.	“It looks like you could use a hug.”
Give child an “out.”	“Let’s talk when things feel better.”
Avoid personalizing remarks.	“It sounds like you’re frustrated.”
Use techniques to reduce negativity.	Stamp out the ANTS (automatic negative thoughts).
Make your home a “kid magnet.”	Install a basketball hoop or mini-golf.
Involve child with community activities.	Visit zoos, museums, parks, etc.
Don’t give undo attention to body scars.	Compliment self-care such as shampooing hair.
Seek medical attention in crisis.	Have a crisis plan.
Promote a healthy diet.	Keep healthy snacks on hand.
Establish dining and exercise routine.	Regular meal times and take daily walks.
Promote home/school communication.	Send a log back and forth between teacher and home.

### **School-wide Interventions**

<b>Interventions</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Promote positive mental health awareness.	School theme-“Today I feel....charts.”
Teach problem-solving model/conflict resolution.	“It’s OK to ask for help.”
Offer experiential learning opportunities.	Use brain-based learning strategies in every classroom.
Peer/staff mentoring program.	Train “study buddies.”
Train staff about self-injurious behavior.	Have a Professional Learning Community as part of your staff development plan.
Imbed social/emotional learning into school curriculum.	Character education
Identify local resources and partnerships.	Co-located and/or integrated mental health services linked to student support services in school building.

### Classroom Interventions

<b>Interventions</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Teach social skills as part of classroom program.	Use social-skills curriculum.
Promote positive classroom climate.	Intentionally foster an atmosphere where students have responsibility to promote emotional well-being among classmates.
Provide healthy “brain” food.	Serve almonds, bananas for tryptophan.
Create an organized classroom.	Review the day in advance, develop study guides and announce upcoming activities. Use organizer as part of routine.
Teach memory strategies.	Use visuals, mnemonics, poetry and music to aid memory.
Use hands-on learning.	Use manipulatives in classes.
Use “problem-solving circles.”	To provide peer support and help return balance to classroom.
Ensure frequent movement.	Stretch and stand every 20-30 minutes.
Teach self-soothing techniques.	Provide basket of self-calming devices: Beanie Babies, Slinkies, worry stones, etc.
Create a “cooling off” area in the classroom.	Special corner in room with bean bag chairs, art supplies, music

### Interventions for Individuals

<b>Interventions</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Develop a caring relationship with child.	Have a conversation with child and offer a sincere compliment. Focus on child’s assets/strengths.
Give directions in small steps. Check for understanding and completion.	Give directions one at a time. Check with child individually.
Develop an individual problem-solving plan.	Teach problem-solving techniques.
Collaborate with student support personnel.	Use consultative and support services to help develop interventions.
Identify the function of the behavior.	Child may be feeling helpless and need a shot of encouragement.
Teach memory strategies.	Develop a “Things to Remember list.”

**Resources:**

Note: These are suggested resources. This is not meant to be a complete list.

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| National Association of School Psychologists              | <a href="http://www.naspoline.org">www.naspoline.org</a>                       |
| Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning | <a href="http://www.casel.org">www.casel.org</a>                               |
| National Institute of Mental Health                       | <a href="http://www.nimh.nih.gov">www.nimh.nih.gov</a>                         |
| Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports              | <a href="http://www.pbis.org">www.pbis.org</a>                                 |
| International Institute for Restorative Practices         | <a href="http://www.restorativepractices.org">www.restorativepractices.org</a> |
| Minnesota Association for Children’s Mental Health        | <a href="http://www.macmh.org">www.macmh.org</a>                               |
| National Alliance for Mental Illness-MN                   | <a href="http://mn.nami.org">http://mn.nami.org</a>                            |
| Parent Advocacy Center for Educational Rights             | <a href="http://www.pacer.org">http://www.pacer.org</a>                        |