



# Understanding Depression in Youth and Strategies

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# My background



- Clinical Psychologist
- DePaul Family and Community Services is a full-service Child, Adolescent and Family behavioral health clinic located on the Lincoln Park campus of DePaul University  
<https://fcs.depaul.edu>

# Mindful Middle Schoolers Program



## ***Resiliency Skills for Anxiety, Depression and Executive Functioning***

- DePaul University, in partnership with the Oak Park Township Community Mental Health Board and D97, plan to offer the following services and supports to the Brooks/Julian community during the 2019-2020 school year:
- Community Talks on technology, anxiety, depression, executive functioning, mindfulness and the social and emotional needs of youth
- School-based group mindfulness-based services for students
- Individual and family therapy at school and home

For more information please reach out to  
[omorriso@depaul.edu](mailto:omorriso@depaul.edu), your school principal or social worker

# Outline



- Facts and statistics
- What is depression?
  - Brain physiology
  - Myths
  - Recognizing signs and symptoms
- Causes of depression
- Disparities and stigma
- Maladaptive coping
- Strategies for working with our youth

# To begin...

- [Depression Video](#)

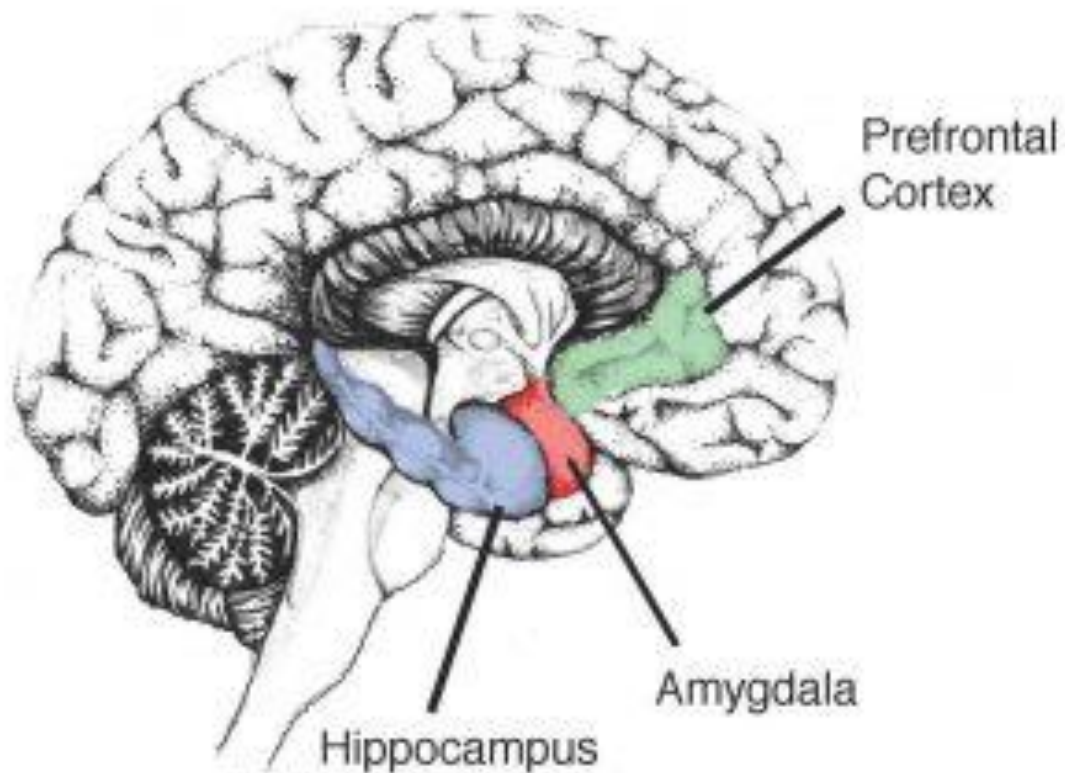


# Facts and Statistics

- 20% of teens experience some kind of depression before adulthood- one of the most **COMMON** medical illnesses
- 10-15% of teens struggle with symptoms of depression at any given time
- 5% suffer from major depressive disorder
- Females experience depression at higher rates during and after adolescence
- Suicide is one of the most serious risks associated with depression- it is the **3<sup>rd</sup> leading** cause of death in 15-24 year olds
- An episode of untreated depression lasts approximately 7-9 months
- 2/3rds struggle with other mental health illnesses



# The Depressed Brain



# Myths vs Facts

## Myth 1

- “My child is just lazy, they need to try harder”

## Fact 1

- Depression can affect motivation, energy levels, sleep, and enjoyment of activities/tasks



# Myths vs Facts

## Myth 2

- “This is just a phase, everyone feels this way sometimes”

## Fact 2

- Sadness is absolutely normal, but untreated depression can last 7-9 months, as well as be associated with unhealthy outcomes (eg., bad grades, substance abuse, poor relationships, etc.)

# Myths vs Facts

## Myth 3

- “My teen just has a bad attitude, and is irritable”

## Fact 3

- In teens, it's important to find out about other changes (e.g., sleep, eating, behavior), which are associated with depression

# Myths vs Facts

## Myth 4

- “My teen has everything- they are smart and have supportive friends/parents

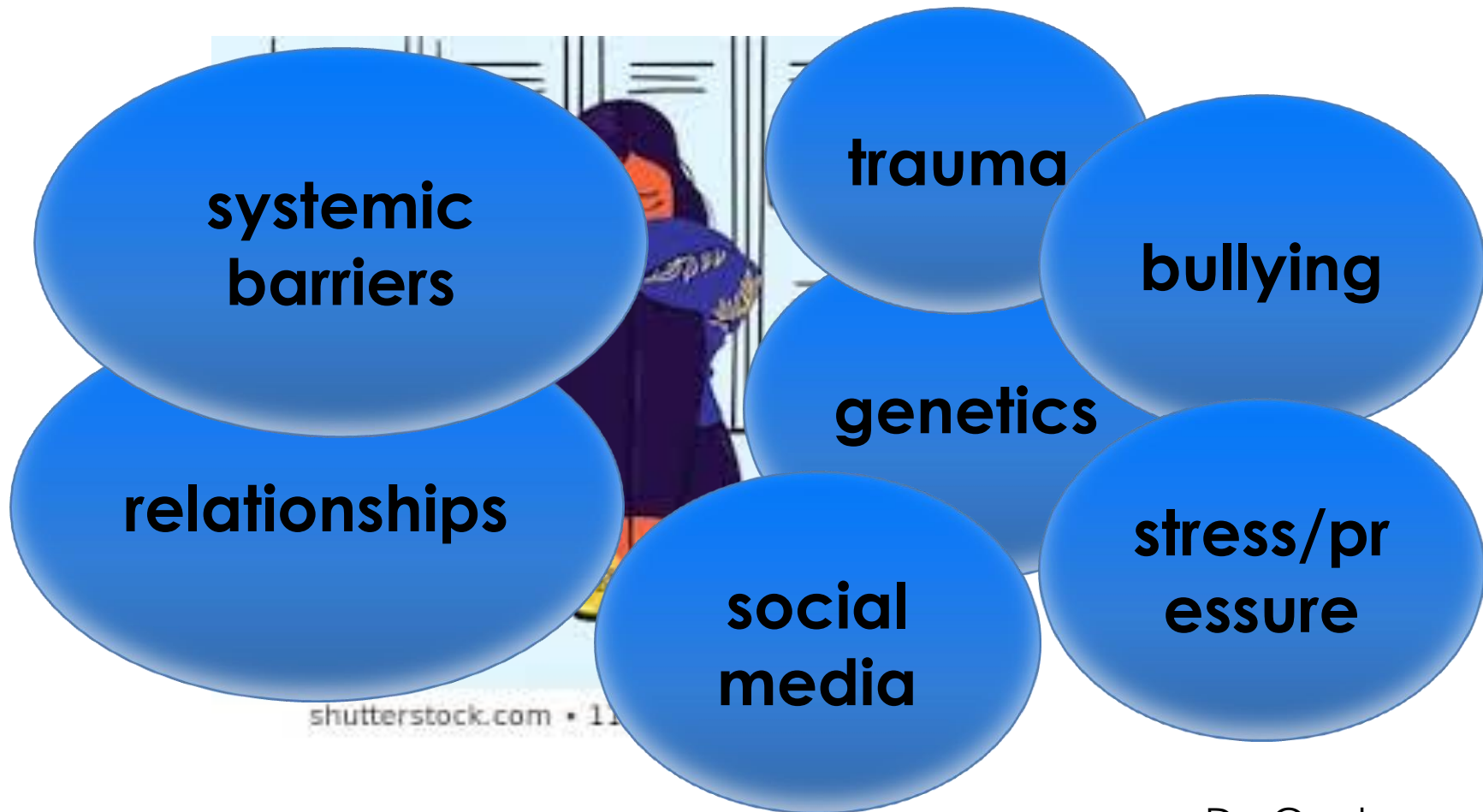
## Fact 4

- Depression runs in families and has a strong genetic component. Social supports can be very protective

# Recognizing Teen Depression

- Sadness or hopelessness
- Irritability, anger
- Tearfulness/frequent crying
- Changes in eating habits
- Changes in sleeping habits
- Loss of interest in activities
- Difficulty with concentration
- Drop in grades
- Change in relationships
- Lack of energy/fatigue
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Withdrawal
- Restlessness/agitation
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Thoughts of death

# What may be causing depression in my teen?



# Disparities and stigma involving depression



- Gender roles
  - Societal pressures to keep emotions pushed down
  - Other ways of expressing- anger, substance abuse, reckless behavior
- Sexual Minorities
  - Higher vulnerability to depression
  - Lack equitable access to mental health care- social stigma, lack of knowledge of providers
- Race
  - Suicide is 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for African American youth
  - Ten states with highest number of African American adolescent suicides (2015–2017) were: Georgia, Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York, and Missouri
  - Lack of equitable access to mental health care
  - Possible intersection of systemic barriers such as low-income, high crime neighborhoods, underinsured



# Stigma video

- [Stigma video](#)



# Outcomes/maladaptive coping strategies

- Problems at school
  - Grades
  - Absences
- Running away
- Substance abuse
- Reckless behavior
- Violence
- Smartphone addiction
- Self injury
- Eating disorders
- Relationship difficulties





# A firsthand account

- [News clip](#)



# What can we do?



# STRATEGY 1:

## Communication

- Listening
- Validation- “that sounds really difficult,” “I’m sorry you’re going through that”
- Modeling reactions, emotion language, behavior
- Initiating conversation



# STRATEGY 2: Encourage social connection



- Quality time
- Encourage time with friends or other social supports
- Involvement in activities or hobbies
- Mentorship or volunteerism



# STRATEGY 3: Prioritize physical health

- Get your teen up and moving
- Setting limits on screen time
- Nutrition
- Sleep routine



# STRATEGY 4: Seeking professional help

- Speak to your school's principal or social worker
- Involve your teen in treatment options
- Explore options
- Be involved in treatment



# STRATEGY 5: Slow things down



- Mindfulness is “**Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally**”
- Mindfulness and depression:
- 1) developing a non-judgmental **attitude**
- 2) Setting an **intention**
- 3) Expanding awareness and paying **attention**

# Mindfulness strategies

- Picking activities/hobbies **intentionally**
- Deep breathing with **awareness** of breath
- Meditation
- Visualization of a safe place (eyes open or closed)
- Gratitude practices









Please fill out this short survey to  
provide feedback:

[vdoobay@depaul.edu](mailto:vdoobay@depaul.edu)

<http://bit.ly/depressionstrategies>