



## **News you can use...from your EAP**

### **Recognizing Childhood Depression**

Childhood depression is a serious illness with serious consequences. Left untreated, depression can lead to school failure, behavior problems, substance abuse and even suicide. Today depression is understood to not simply be a passing blue mood but instead is known to often be the result of a treatable chemical imbalance in the brain. But because a child may not seem sad, many parents and teachers of depressed children and teens are never aware that a child may be suffering in silence.

### **Warning signs for depression in children and teens**

Child psychiatrists advise parents to learn the signs of depression in children and teens. If one or more of the warning signs below persists for more than two weeks, parents should seek professional help:

- Persistent sadness and hopelessness
- Withdrawal from friends and activities they once enjoyed
- Increased irritability or agitation
- Missed school or declining school performance
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Indecision, lack of concentration or forgetfulness
- Poor self-esteem or excessive guilt
- Frequent physical complaints such as headaches and stomachaches
- Lack of enthusiasm, motivation or low energy
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse, especially with teens
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide

*Source: National Mental Health Association*

Additionally, some teens may become sexually promiscuous to avoid feelings of depression. Teens also may express their depression through hostile, aggressive, or risk-taking behavior.

### **Getting help**

If you suspect that your child or teen may need help for depression, it is very important that your loved one receive prompt, professional assessment and treatment. If you need help, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a great place to start. Your EAP can provide you and your dependents with no cost, confidential counseling, referrals and information. EAP counselors are mental health professionals who are specially trained to assist people in getting the right help for depression.

To obtain no cost counseling or other EAP services, please call **800-869-0276** or securely request services from the Member Access section of the EAP website:

[www.eapconsultants.com](http://www.eapconsultants.com)