

Am I Depressed?

RATIONALE Although many adolescents experience some degree of depression during their teenage years, they often are unaware that what they are experiencing has a label and that there are common identifiable symptoms. Helping them learn more about their symptoms and engaging them in a self-assessment is a necessary first step.

MATERIALS

- ▷ Am I Depressed? Checklist (p. 124)
- ▷ A pen or pencil
- ▷ A blank sheet of paper

PROCEDURE

1. When a client is referred by parents or teachers who suspect depression, or when she self-refers because she just isn't feeling "right," it is important to inform her about symptoms of depression and engage her in a self-assessment.
2. Share the Am I Depressed? Checklist and invite her to check off symptoms that apply to her, informing her that you will discuss the symptoms together to determine the extent to which she might be depressed and how it affects her.
3. After she has completed the list, review it together, noting the intensity and frequency of the symptoms and discussing how they affect her.
4. Next, ask the client to use the blank sheet of paper to identify what she has tried so far to help her feel less depressed and to rank the degree of effectiveness using a 1 (not very effective) to 5 (helps quite a bit) scale.
5. Review the list and ask her to select two things to try during the following week, sharing with her that in the next session, the two of you will identify other things she can do, including a discussion of medication if the depression is severe.

Am I Depressed? Checklist

Directions: Read each of the symptoms and do your best to identify the frequency and intensity of these feelings using the following rating system.

Circle Y (yes) or N (no) beside each symptom. If you circle **Y**, indicate the frequency and intensity by circling the appropriate letter, as follows:

Frequency: **H** = hourly, **S** = several times a day, **D** = once a day or less, **W** = 2 or 3 times a week or less

Intensity: **L** = low (not strong, not much), **M** = (moderate), **H** = high (intense, bad)

Symptom	Frequency				Intensity				
Irritability	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Negativity	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Sleep problems	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Cry easily	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Inability to concentrate	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Appetite change	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Unhappy	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Tired, lethargic	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Hopeless	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Overwhelmed	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Racing thoughts	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Down on self	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Suicidal thought	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Pessimistic	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Loss of interest in usual activities	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Anxious	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Emotionally "dead"	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Bored	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Aches, pains	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
No energy	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Indecisive	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Withdrawn	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Isolated	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Want to/stay in bed a lot	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Agitated	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Don't shower or pay attention to appearance	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H
Excessive guilt/self-blame	Y	N	H	S	D	W	L	M	H

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Don't Stay Depressed

RATIONALE Given that adolescents live in the "here and now," it is easy for them to become overwhelmed and feel hopeless when they are depressed. Consequently, it is important to empower them so that they have many different strategies for coping more effectively because it is difficult for them to generate ideas when they are down.

MATERIALS

- ▷ 3 envelopes (one labeled *Think*, one labeled *Do*, one labeled *Who*)
- ▷ 15 to 20 small index cards
- ▷ A pen or pencil

PROCEDURE

1. After discussing what the client feels is relevant relative to his depression and he has shared some examples of what he thinks and does when he is depressed, indicate that there are many things that can help alleviate depressed feelings. Explain that these strategies can be divided into different categories: What the client can *think* (things that would help him feel better, ways to correct distorted thinking, etc.), what the client can *do* (activities), and *whom* he can turn to for support.
2. Hand the client the first envelope, labeled *Think*, and encourage him to identify five things he could think about (pleasant thoughts) or how he could challenge distorted thinking (e.g., is everyone against me, or just a few people?). Write these on the index cards. If he cannot think of anything, give a few examples to help stimulate his own ideas. For example, if he gets depressed because he doesn't perform well in sports and therefore thinks everyone will laugh at him when he tries to shoot a basket, challenge his thinking: Has this ever happened to you or others before? If so, did everyone laugh? and so forth. After he has identified different things he can think relative to what he is depressed about, have him put them in the *Think* envelope.
3. Then hand him the second envelope, labeled *Do*, and ask him to think about things he can do to make himself feel better (take a walk, listen to good music, call a friend, etc.). Give him several

index cards. Ask him to write things he can do on these cards and put them in the envelope when finished.

4. Finally, give him the third envelope, *Who*, and have him identify on the index cards whom he can contact when he needs support, putting these in the *Who* envelope.
5. Invite discussion and contract with the client to keep the ideas close at hand so that he can have ready access to them when needed. During the next counseling session, review what he tried and how it worked, and encourage him to add ideas to each envelope.

Stop or Go Behavior

RATIONALE Using this intervention can help children learn to distinguish between positive and negative behaviors.

- MATERIALS**
- ▷ A game board (from the appendix or one of your own design; if you construct your own game board, you should depict a road with 20 spaces, along which the client advances his car)
 - ▷ A small toy car, such as a Matchbox car
 - ▷ A sheet of paper
 - ▷ A pen or pencil
 - ▷ Stop or Go Cards (pp. 224–225)

- PROCEDURE**
1. When a client presents with behavioral problems, engage him in this intervention that helps him recognize the difference between positive and negative behaviors.
 2. To play the game, invite your client to take the car and place it on the space labeled "start." Explain to him that this game requires him to identify negative behaviors that should be stopped and positive behaviors that he can continue to use.
 3. To begin, ask the client to draw a Stop or Go Card from the pile and read it. If he thinks that this is a positive ("go") behavior, he moves his car one space ahead and discards his card. If he thinks that the card he drew is a negative ("stop") behavior, he moves back one space and puts that card in a separate discard pile.
 4. If, after all the cards have been drawn, the client is not at the end of the road, he can take the cards from the "stop" behavior discard pile, suggest a better behavior, and advance a space.
 5. Continue until the client reaches the end of the road. Debrief by asking what he learned about "stop" and "go" behaviors, which ones he uses most often, and which ones he would like to use.
 6. Have the client select three "go" behaviors he would like to work on and make a specific plan outlining how he will do this. Ask him

to draw a picture of a car on a sheet of paper and write his plan on the car to serve as a reminder of positive behaviors he wants to work on.

Stop or Go Cards

<p>A classmate makes a face at you, so you punch him.</p>	<p>Your locker mate leaves his stuff on your side, so you throw it onto the floor.</p>
<p>The teacher quietly asks you to stay in your seat. You stick your tongue out at her.</p>	<p>In music class, someone makes fun of the way you sing. You hit her with your book.</p>
<p>Your father reminds you to do your chores, and you do them right away.</p>	<p>Your little brother, who shares a room with you, keeps talking to you while you are trying to get to sleep. You scream at him to shut up.</p>
<p>You are playing flag football. When the coach takes you and a couple of other players out and puts others in, you get mad and yell at the coach.</p>	<p>You are playing in the park and see someone take a ball from a much younger girl. You walk over to the boy and tell him that you saw him do that and that you think he should give it back to her.</p>
<p>You are walking home from school, and a kid from another class teases you about your backpack. You just ignore him and keep on walking.</p>	<p>You are in gym class and everyone is shooting baskets. Your friend keeps trying to shoot but can never make a basket. You tell him that it's good that he tried and that someday he'll be better.</p>

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Stop or Go Cards (continued)

<p>You are in the supermarket with your dad. He refuses to let you have a snack, so you throw yourself on the floor and have a fit.</p>	<p>The teacher tells the class that they have to stay in for recess because they were too rowdy. You don't think it is fair. You get really mad and kick the chair.</p>
<p>You and a friend are riding your bikes home from school when you see some younger kids ahead of you. You don't like these kids and you really want to beat them up, but you don't.</p>	<p>In science class, the girl in the row ahead of you keeps turning around and staring at you. You can't stand her. You tell her in a quiet voice that you are working and would she please stop bothering you.</p>
<p>You and your brother are watching television. He flicks the channel to a show you don't like, but instead of getting mad at him, you just go and find something else to do.</p>	<p>Yesterday on the way home from school, a kid in your class kept trying to steal your backpack. Today you put your chewing gum on his chair.</p>
<p>One of your classmates calls you a name. You know it's not what you are, so you just ignore her.</p>	<p>You don't think it is fair that your brother, who is a year younger, gets to stay up as late as you do to watch a special television show. You are mad, but you don't make a big deal about it.</p>
<p>Your dad tells you that you can't have a treat until you finish your vegetables. You hate vegetables, so you spit out what's in your mouth and tell him you aren't going to eat them.</p>	<p>At school, your math partner keeps peeking at your paper. It really makes you mad, but you just tell him that he should do his own work.</p>
<p>You really want to stay overnight at your friend's house but your parents won't let you. You scream and throw a tantrum and tell them that they are the meanest parents on the block.</p>	<p>On the way to school, two older kids start picking on you and your friend. You just keep walking and do your best to ignore them.</p>