

# “CHANGE IS HARD” DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY IN ADOLESCENTS



Adolescence is a vulnerable period for mental health, with many youth struggling to make sense of the conflicting pressures and feelings they experience. Parents and caregivers do not need to face these challenges alone. There are many resources available to help adolescents through these challenges. Your pediatrician or primary care physician can provide valuable support during these times.

## ‘WHO AM I?’

Adolescents often experience a wide range of often conflicting emotions:

- Identity vs. role confusion
- Excitement about growing and fear of adulthood
- Social relationships – ‘How do I fit in?’
- Experimentation and exploration
- Existential crisis – ‘‘What’s the point of all this?’’
- Family conflict – ‘‘I hate you, please support me.’’

## THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ONLY ADDED TO THESE CHALLENGES:

- Loneliness, social isolation
- Death, loss, grief leading to depression
- Fear of loss or infection, leading to anxiety
- Abuse, highly-expressed emotions can cause trauma, PTSD
- Access to lethal means can lead to self-harm and suicide

**THERE ARE RESOURCES THAT CAN HELP!**



<https://ohioaap.org/storeitsafe>

**SAFETY of Children Around Firearms**  
Partnership for the Safety of Children Around Firearms  
Store It Safe: Teen Around Firearms  
Discussion Guide  
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

**“Store It Safe” Teen Handout**  
provided by the Partnership for the Safety of Children Around Firearms

**Firearm Facts:**  
• 1 of 10 high school students in a large metropolitan area reported they have or easy access to a handgun.  
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**Emotional Triggers Should Not Be Ignored**  
What can you do to keep your teen safe?  
• The teen brain is still developing so teens are not always able to make the best choices for every type of situation.  
• You can reduce injury to your teen by knowing high risks and signs of depression or risky behaviors and react to warning signs.  
• Teen can engage in risky behaviors and react to warning signs.  
• Depressed or angry impulses decisions with deadly results. Take action.

**Risks**  
• 15% of teens with guns in their homes have been injured.  
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**Medications**  
• Medications can be used to help teens with depression or anxiety.  
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**Alcohol**  
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**What do you need to know about suicide to keep you and your friends safe?**  
• You are not alone.  
• Depression people think about suicide when they are feeling depressed, hopeless or alone. It is important to talk to someone you trust about your feelings.  
• If you are or know someone who is thinking about suicide, tell a trusted adult that you are worried about your friend.  
• If your friend is not sure you talk to a trusted adult, recommend it is locked up.

**Always treat a gun as if it is loaded.**  
• Don't pick up a gun or put your finger on the trigger.  
• Guns should always be kept locked up.

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**If you or a friend is thinking about suicide:**  
• Ask them if they are thinking about suicide and that it is serious.  
• Care - let your friend know how much you care about them.  
• Tell a trusted adult that you are thinking about suicide, they'll help you.  
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**90% of high school students** who have a gun in their home have been injured.  
**Every 3 hours** a teenager dies by gun.  
**Suicide** is the leading cause of death for teens.

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American Academy of Pediatrics  
Kiwanis  
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
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For more information, please visit:

<https://ohioaap.org/education-cme-moc-ii/preventive-health-program/>