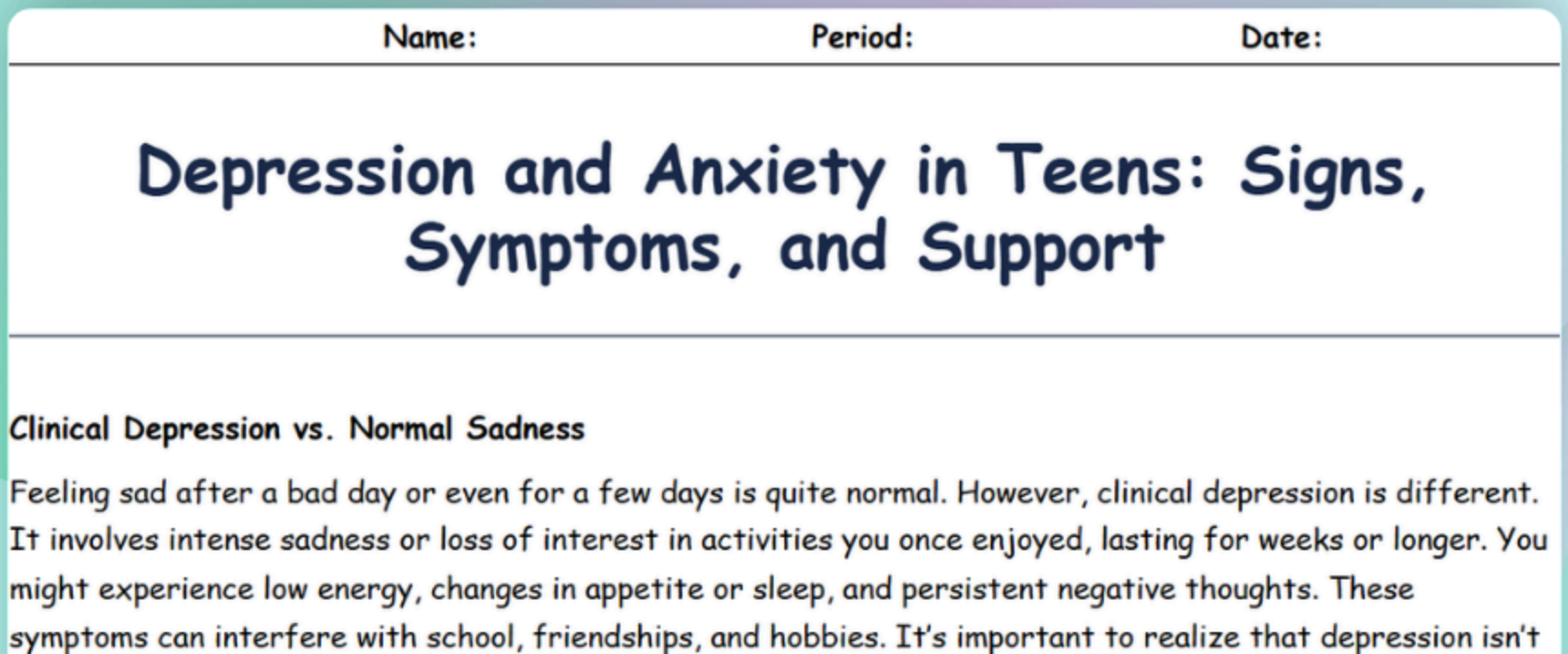
NO PREP

Depression and Anxiety in Teens

Signs, Symptoms, and Support

Includes: Student reading, case study, differentiated questions, teacher key



Name: Period: Date:

Depression and Anxiety in Teens: Signs, Symptoms, and Support

Clinical Depression vs. Normal Sadness

Feeling sad after a bad day or even for a few days is quite normal. However, clinical depression is different. It involves intense sadness or loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed, lasting for weeks or longer. You might experience low energy, changes in appetite or sleep, and persistent negative thoughts. These symptoms can interfere with school, friendships, and hobbies. It's important to realize that depression isn't

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Anxiety vs. Stress

Stress often has a clear cause—a deadline, a test, or a big event. Once that event passes, stress levels typically decrease. Anxiety, on the other hand, can persist and may arise without a specific trigger. It often involves excessive worry, fear, or a constant sense of unease. Physical symptoms like a racing heart, sweaty palms, or shortness of breath can accompany anxiety. Teen anxiety can stem from multiple factors: academic pressure, social dynamics, or personal insecurities. Sometimes it becomes so intense that it disrupts daily activities—avoiding school, skipping social events, or lying awake at night with racing thoughts. Recognizing that what you're feeling may be anxiety rather than ordinary stress is key to seeking the right help.

Warning Signs and Daily Life Impact

Both depression and anxiety can show up in subtle ways. Maybe you're withdrawing from friends or losing interest in a favorite hobby. Perhaps you feel constantly on edge, have sudden mood swings, or struggle to focus in class. Physical complaints like unexplained stomachaches or headaches could also signal underlying emotional distress. Over time, these conditions can seriously affect daily life. School performance may drop if you can't concentrate or motivate yourself to complete assignments. Relationships might suffer because you feel misunderstood or become irritable. You might even engage in risky behaviors just to cope. Recognizing changes in how you feel, think, or behave is crucial in deciding when to reach out for assistance.

Importance of Professional Help and Peer Understanding

Professional help can come in many forms: a school counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist, or social worker. These experts are trained to understand what you're going through and to offer strategies for managing symptoms. Medication can be helpful for some, while others may benefit from therapy or a combination of approaches. The main point is to talk to someone qualified who can guide you toward recovery. Peer understanding also matters. Classmates who avoid mocking or trivializing mental health struggles can foster a supportive environment. If a friend confides in you about their anxiety or depression, listening without judgment is powerful. Encourage them to seek professional help if their feelings are overwhelming. Your understanding and empathy can reduce the stigma that often surrounds mental health conditions.

Debunking Myths and Promoting Positive Habits

Some common myths about depression and anxiety include the idea that these conditions are just "attention-seeking" or signs of weakness. In reality, they're legitimate medical conditions influenced by genetics, environment, and personal experiences. Encouraging open, fact-based discussions can help dismantle these misconceptions. Additionally, developing positive habits supports mental wellness. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and sufficient sleep are foundational. Mindfulness practices—like meditation or deep breathing—can mitigate symptoms. Making time for hobbies and friendships offers emotional balance. While these habits won't

always cure clinical depression or severe anxiety on their own, they create a healthier context in which recovery can happen more smoothly.

Key Information: Mental Health Snapshot

Condition	Key Indicators	Potential Support
Depression	Prolonged sadness, loss of interest, fatigue	Therapy, medication, lifestyle changes
Generalized Anxiety	Constant worry, restlessness, insomnia	Counseling, relaxation techniques, medication
Panic Disorder	Sudden intense fear, rapid heartbeat, trembling	Therapy, coping strategies, possible meds
Social Anxiety	Extreme fear of judgment in social settings	Gradual exposure, cognitive-behavioral therapy

Case Study Excerpt

Anya was known as the "life of the party." She always cracked jokes and had a large circle of friends. However, behind closed doors, she felt an ongoing sense of dread. She started avoiding social events and experienced panic attacks where her heart pounded and breathing felt impossible. Despite her outgoing image, Anya often cried alone at night, convinced no one would believe she was struggling. When her closest friend noticed Anya's absence from gatherings, she reached out to check in. Anya, feeling both terrified and relieved, admitted she was scared of her own emotions. Her friend encouraged her to see the school counselor, who helped Anya recognize she might be dealing with an anxiety disorder. Through therapy sessions and simple coping skills like breathing exercises, Anya found that embracing vulnerability led her to real support.

1. What misconception about Anya's mental state might people have had based on her outward personality?

_____

_____

2. How did seeking counseling help Anya cope with her situation?

_____

_____

Multiple Choice

1. Depression typically involves:

    a) A persistent low mood and loss of interest lasting weeks or more

    b) Feeling sad for a few hours and then bouncing back by the next morning

    c) Constant happiness in social settings

    d) Extreme anger without sadness

2. A key difference between stress and anxiety is that:

    a) Anxiety always disappears right after the stressful event ends and leaves no worry behind

    b) They are exactly the same experience

    c) Stress never involves physical symptoms

    d) Stress is linked to a clear cause, while anxiety may persist without an obvious trigger

3. Which of the following is a myth about depression and anxiety?

a) They can be influenced by genetics and environment

b) People with these conditions just want attention and can snap out of it if they try hard enough

c) Lifestyle changes can support recovery, though they may not fully resolve a severe condition alone

d) Seeking professional help is a valid step toward improvement

Matching

Write the letter of the correct definition on the line next to each term.

Term	Definition
1. ___ Clinical Depression	A) A brief worry that ends as soon as an event finishes
2. ___ Peer Understanding	B) A widely held but false belief or idea
3. ___ Anxiety Disorder	C) Encouraging environment that avoids judgment and stigma
4. ___ Stress	D) Excessive and persistent worry impacting daily life
5. ___ Myth	E) A prolonged mental health condition with intense sadness and loss of interest

Fill-in-the-Blank

1. _____ can manifest as a racing heart, sweaty palms, or feelings of impending doom.

2. A support system and professional guidance can help break the cycle of _____.

3. Contrary to popular misconceptions, depression is not just a temporary mood but a _____ condition.

Short Answer

Answer each question in 2-4 complete sentences.

1. Why might someone with an outgoing personality, like Anya, hesitate to reveal they're struggling with anxiety?

2. How can peer support reduce the stigma around mental illness for teens?

3. What is one actionable step a teen might take if they suspect they have clinical depression?