

# Mood disorder part #2



Mood Disorders Depression, a feeling of sorrow that seems to overtake individuals and cause them to be enveloped by a cloak of sadness for a significant period of time can affect any age group. In this modern era of both parents working and leaving the child unattended for extended periods of time depression can be observed in an increasing number of children.

For example, an abusive sexual relationship between a relative and a young girl of ten years may trigger depression in the child. The child may manifest this depression by displaying any number of inappropriate behaviors.

An abused child may alternate between periods of irritability and periods of worthlessness and helplessness. What is interesting is that during these phases emotional upheaval those who come in contact with her may be unaware of her dilemma and accuse her of unsociability, violence and as having total disrespect for members of her society.

Fundamental signals of depression in children may be a sudden change in academic performance as well as an apparent change in personality. A specific illustration of such a change would be that an energetic and intelligent child may suddenly become lethargic and appear to be disinterested in school work and other activities that formerly brought pleasure.

Such a child may in fact begin to disrespect teachers and other classmates but this child would never dare to disrespect the abuser. Foul language, inappropriate behavior such as promiscuity, fighting and stealing may be the order of the day for such a child. It is usually at this juncture that a teacher may become concerned and request the assistance of guidance officers and social workers.

Not only are emotional and behavioral signs present in the depressed child

but also a mounting number of physical complaints. The child may begin to complain of headaches and stomachaches. This child may even experience difficulty in sleeping patterns. Further, there may be an abrupt increase or a decrease in appetite.

Eventually one major incident between an authority figure and the child may lead to the child having and voicing desires of committing suicide. This desire to commit suicide may be expressed quietly to a trusted authority figure or shouted loudly as a threat to another individual in authority. On the other extreme this child may also voice the desire to fatally harm another individual.

Clearly, the depressed child would manifest differently to adults who may still have the ability to hide their true feelings at times. The child suffering from depression due to sexual abuse may be unwilling to remain at home with the abuser but at the same time she may also be unwilling to fake the desire to explode in a different setting such as at school. On observation of more than four signs of depression in a child a concerned individual should report the matter to qualified personnel who has the expertise of dealing with depressed children.

#### References

Mood Disorders. (2006). National Mental Health Information Center: United States Department of Health and Human Services-Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved October 4, 2008 from <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/ken98-0049/default.asp>