

HOW DOES A “BAD DAY” DIFFER FROM DEPRESSION

A Guide for Parents and Teachers

Kids and adults alike use the words “depressed” and “depression” to describe both normal reactions to stress, fatigue, or boredom (a “bad day”) and serious emotional problems (the disorder of depression)> It’s important to help children recognize the differences between the normal feelings and experiences of a “Bad Day” and the experienced feelings and depression.

How Does a “Bad Day” Differ from Depression

Time period - depression lasts a lot longer (two weeks or more) than feelings and experiences of a “bad day”

Severity - depression is severe, and people can’t just “snap out of it” or quickly feel better

Triggers - “bad days” involve stressful experiences, but depression happens even when life seems to be going great

“BAD DAYS”		DEPRESSION
You’re angry today - because a friend has spread rumors about you	Anger	You’re angry and irritable lots of the time, or at lots of people. You’re jumpy - and blow up over the littlest things.
You’ve got an upset stomach and don’t feel like eating this morning - because of a big event coming up.	Physical Problems	You have headaches and stomach aches every week. You just don’t feel real right. Or your weight has changed a lot.
You’re tired today - because you stayed up late last night.	Feeling Tired	You’re tired most of every day - you just can’t seem to get enough sleep
You’ve been crying a lot - because someone you love is very sick or has died.	Crying or Sadness	You cry at the littlest thing - you don’t even know why. Or you’re just not able to be happy about anything these days.
You’re discouraged this week - because you’re having a hard time with math.	Discouraged or Hopeless	You’re discouraged about more than math. You feel that you can’t do anything right - and that you’ll never feel good again.
You’re bored all weekend - you’re sick and can’t be out with your friends this weekend doing your usual stuff.	Bored	You feel bored or “blah” a lot of the time - nothing seems fun. You don’t even enjoy your friends anymore.

<p>You can't concentrate in class today - because you're upset about the grade you got on a test this morning.</p>	<p>Grades</p>	<p>You can't concentrate on your homework lately. You forget assignments, and your grades are falling.</p>
<p>You're wondering about death - one of your grandparents is very ill right now.</p>	<p>Thinking of Death</p>	<p>You think a lot about dying or about hurting yourself. It just feels like life is not worth living anymore.</p>
<p>You've had trouble falling asleep the last few nights - you're awake and thinking about your move to a new home.</p>	<p>Sleep Problems</p>	<p>You have trouble falling asleep most of the time - or you fall asleep but then wake up and lay awake during the night.</p>
<p>You felt fine this morning - then several things went wrong, and now you're ready to scream!</p>	<p>Moods</p>	<p>You wake up feeling unhappy. And then any little thing can make you cry, blow up at someone, or just head for your room.</p>
<p>You're feeling guilty right now - because you didn't keep a promise to your brother. And you're worried about your father losing his job.</p>	<p>Worries or Guilt</p>	<p>You feel guilty and like you're a burden to family and friends. Or you feel scared a lot. Maybe you don't want to leave your home because you're afraid something bad will happen.</p>
<p>You're lonely - because most of your friends are away this week.</p>	<p>Lonely</p>	<p>You feel lonely most of the time, and like no one understands or loves you. Or you feel disconnected from your own feelings.</p>