

➤ **To learn more**

**Books:**

**When Nothing Matters Anymore: A Survival Guide for Depressed Teens**, by Bev Cobain, 1998

**Depression: Challenge the Beast Within Yourself... and Win**, by Cait Irwiin, 1998

**Do You Have a Depressive Illness? How to Tell, What to Do**, by Donald F. Klein and Paul H. Wender, 1998

**Help Me, I'm Sad: Recognizing, Treating and Preventing Childhood and Adolescent Depression**, by D. Fassler and L. S. Dumas, 1997

**Websites:**

[www.ndmda.org](http://www.ndmda.org)  
[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)  
[www.depression.org](http://www.depression.org)

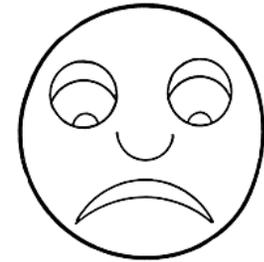
➤ **Help for depression in the Montreal area**

- ❑ *Montreal Children's Hospital:* **514-412-4449**
- ❑ *Kids Help Phone:* **1-800-668-6868**
- ❑ *Suicide Action:* **514-723-4000**
- ❑ *Herzl Family Practice Centre — Adolescent Clinic:* **514-340-8253**
- ❑ *Revivre:* **514-529-8866**
- ❑ *Depressed Anonymous:* **514-278-2130**
- ❑ *Drug Help Line:* **514-527-2626**
- ❑ *Head & Hands:* **514-481-0277**

AMI-Quebec has many programs to help families and people suffering from mental illness. If you recognize yourself or someone you care about in this pamphlet, please contact us and we will direct you to an appropriate resource.

514-486-1448  
[www.amiquebec.org](http://www.amiquebec.org)  
[outreach@amiquebec.org](mailto:outreach@amiquebec.org)

# DEPRESSION



**AMI-QUÉBEC**  
**Action on Mental Illness**

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*She was the editor of her high school yearbook and she was on the graduation committee. Her marks were above average and her friends and teachers liked her for her outgoing personality and her cheerfulness.*

*When she started staying in bed until late afternoon her parents figured that it was due to her busy schedule. When her grades started slipping, they attributed it to all her extracurricular activities. After all, she seemed fine.*

*Then why did she feel awful inside? All she wanted to do was sleep and cry. Every day was an effort to put on a happy face. When teachers thought she was concentrating on her work, she was really dreaming of ways of ending her life. Was she so weak that she couldn't make herself feel better? What kind of person was she? Nobody, she believed, would understand her, so she didn't say a word.*

Depression can appear at any age and is one of the most common and treatable mental illnesses. Up to 20% of the population may be affected by depression during their lifetime. Nearly everyone who receives treatment benefits from it. However, many people fail to recognize the symptoms and don't get help because they think their depression is a sign of weakness. Others try to make themselves "snap out of it" or just "get over it." That, however, is not always possible.

*There are different types of depression:*

- **Major Depression** has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Symptoms may last for months. Left untreated, depression tends to reoccur, and each time it may last longer and become more severe.
- **Dysthymia** is a low-grade, long-term depression that can go on for years. A person will be functional but always be "down in the dumps". They are not able to enjoy life and may feel inadequate, gloomy, and negative.

Depression can be accompanied by anxiety, panic, and paranoia. These symptoms can be scary, but once the depression is properly treated, they tend to diminish and may disappear altogether. Following is a list of **warning signs** for depression:

- Too much or too little sleep
- Change in appetite; eating much more or much less than usual
- Agitated (anxious or worried) or slowed behaviour
- Loss of interest or pleasure in friends, hobbies, or school
- Loss of energy; fatigue
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt, self blame; doubt and hopelessness about everything
- Difficulty concentrating, indecision, or drop in grades
- Loud, obnoxious, anti-social behaviour or unusual risk-taking
- Violent outbursts and lack of self-control
- Use of alcohol or drugs to feel better

- Unexplained aches and pains
- Thoughts of death and suicide

***If several of these symptoms last for more than 2 weeks then seek medical help.***

**If you are having persistent thoughts of suicide get help immediately.**

### ➤ **Getting help**

If you or someone you know shows signs of depression then it is important to get help. ***The sooner an illness is treated, the better the outcome.*** Telling friends is not enough. It is important to talk with an adult whom you trust: a parent, guidance counselor, social worker, coach, or teacher. You can also visit a family doctor or CLSC and explain what you are experiencing. Treatment will vary depending on how severe the depression is. In some cases, therapy may be enough to help adjust to difficult life situations. In other cases, medication may be prescribed to help boost a person out of the "low". Sometimes the two are combined. Do not hesitate to reach out for help: depression can be treated.