

# Nancy Ruben, MFT

A Los Angeles Psychotherapist: Individual, Couple, Child and Family Therapy

## Child and Teen Depression Checklist

- Withdrawal from the activities and friends once enjoyed
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits?
- A drop in school performance
- Irritated, angry mood
- Low energy and motivation
- Frequent physical complaints, like headaches and stomach aches, which don't have a physical cause?
- Feelings of hopelessness and helplessness

These are some of the signs of depression. Help is available thru psychotherapy: working with a therapist about ways to better cope. Many times for the younger child, family therapy is critical in helping the child feel supported through any number of stressors they might be experiencing. Research has shown that psychotherapy is very helpful in managing depression.

In therapy with teens and children struggling with depression, I find it helpful to identify depression as a force outside of themselves that they are struggling with. Although they might feel like it – “depression” is not who they are! In therapy, looking at “depression” as something they struggle with helps my clients find a sense of freedom from it, as well as, an ability to see themselves apart from it. We explore the causes of “depression”, the stressors that might be creating it (i.e. family/school) problems, etc. Through our exploration in psychotherapy we find the places “depression” can't touch (yes, there are those places).

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*Individual • Couple • Adolescent • Child and Family Therapy*

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## Child and Teen Depression Checklist – (cont.)

At times we use art to help us explore: Drawing a picture of “depression,” creating spokes coming out of it highlighting it’s causes, pictures of life when depression is in the picture and when it isn’t, exploring what is happening when it is missing. This speaks to the therapy I do with couples, families and individuals. In our culture, so much time is spent focusing on what is broken, on the problem and little on the times when the problem is missing and why.

Help is available to defeat depression.

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