

# LGBTQ Youth Depression



Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning people may be at a higher risk of developing clinical depression than their heterosexual counterparts. In fact, LGBTQ are nearly four times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers. It has been suggested that in as much as 30% of all adolescent suicides, young people may have been struggling with their gender identity. LGBTQ orientation does not cause suicide, but studies suggest that certain environmental factors such as society's attitudes toward people who do not conform to traditional gender roles, the harsh environment created by homophobia, or the aftermath of the coming out process may trigger an attempt.

LGBTQ people often experience homophobia as stigmatization, negative images in the media, violence, lack of social support, discrimination, harassment and verbal abuse. Experiencing these issues, along with clinical depression, may result in dropping out of school, problems with family or work, homelessness, social isolation, substance abuse and suicidal thoughts or attempts.

**If you notice any symptoms or warning signs in a friend or family member he or she should see a doctor to be evaluated for clinical depression.** About 85% of people who suffer from clinical depression can be successfully treated with a combination of medication and therapy. There are professionals who specialize in helping LGBT people who suffer from depression .

## Know the symptoms of Depression:

- Feeling sad, empty or numb.
- Feeling tired all the time; repeatedly falling asleep in class.
- Feeling hopeless, helpless, worthless, or guilty.
- Feeling angry or moody, crying easily, chronic worrying, or experiencing panic attacks.
- Avoiding friends; feeling alone even with friends.
- Loss of interest in things that used to be fun.
- Difficulty concentrating, doing schoolwork, remembering things, or making decisions.
- Eating disturbances, like eating more or less than usual, or throwing up.
- Recurring headaches, backaches, or stomachaches.
- Alcohol or drug use to escape or to mask feelings.
- Thinking about, planning, or attempting suicide.

## Know the warning signs of suicide:

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself.
- Looking for a way to kill oneself.
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose.
- Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain.
- Talking about being a burden to others.
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Acting anxious, agitated, or reckless.
- Sleeping too little or too much.
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated.
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- Displaying extreme mood swings.