

ACT

TO SAVE A LIFE

Middle School can be a challenging time for everyone. The independence and expectations can be a lot of fun, but they can also be stressful and scary. Your classes are more demanding, friendships can get complicated, and planning for high school can seem like a heavy weight. It's normal to feel overwhelmed and down at times. However, when you or someone you know feels that way for more than a couple of weeks, it might be a sign of depression and time to ACT®.

ACKNOWLEDGE

THAT YOU SEE SIGNS OF DEPRESSION OR SUICIDE IN A FRIEND OR YOURSELF.

CARE

SHOW YOUR FRIEND THAT YOU CARE BY LISTENING AND OFFERING SUPPORT.

TELL

A TRUSTED ADULT SO THAT YOU CAN GET HELP.

Everyone has bad days. If we didn't, we might not appreciate the good ones! But, what happens when those bad days stack up, or you don't seem to be able to stop feeling lousy? People will often say they are "depressed" about something but then they seem happy the next day, so it's hard to understand the difference between what's a bad day and what's depression.

WHAT DEPRESSION IS:



- **LASTING.** Feeling a strong mood that involves sadness, discouragement, despair, or hopelessness that lasts for a couple of weeks or more.
- **DIFFICULTY CONCENTRATING.** It can be difficult to focus on school work or other things when someone is depressed.
- **NEGATIVE THINKING.** A person who is depressed may see everything as bad and not likely to get better.
- **LOW ENERGY.** Sometimes, people with depression do not have much energy to get up and do what they used to enjoy.
- **EASILY IRRITATED.** Depression can show up as a lasting mood of feeling irritable, easily annoyed or angry.

WHAT DEPRESSION IS NOT:

- ✗ **DISAPPOINTED** one afternoon because you did poorly on a test.
- ✗ **FEELING SAD** over an argument with a friend.
- ✗ **DISCOURAGED** because your team is continuing its losing streak.

MORE INFORMATION:

[KIDSHEALTH.ORG/TEEN/YOUR_MIND/
MENTAL_HEALTH/DEPRESSION.HTML](https://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/depression.html)

THE FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL

You probably see and hear a lot about alcohol—from TV, movies, music, and your friends. But what are the real facts about underage alcohol use?

FACT: Most young people don't drink alcohol. In fact, research shows that more than 70% of youth aged 12 to 20 haven't had a drink in the past month.

FACT: Alcohol is just as harmful as other drugs and can actually increase your risk for many deadly diseases, including cancer. Drinking too much alcohol too quickly can lead to alcohol poisoning, which can kill you.

FACT: Drinking alcohol when you're under 21 can create big problems because it's illegal. If caught, you may have to pay a fine, perform community service, or take alcohol awareness classes. Kids who drink are also more likely to get poor grades in school, and are at higher risk for being crime victims.

FACT: Alcohol affects young people differently than adults. A young person's brain and body are still growing. Drinking alcohol can cause learning problems or lead to adult alcoholism. People who begin drinking before age 15 are five times more likely to misuse or become dependent on alcohol than those who begin drinking after age 21.

IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT A FRIEND WHO IS DRINKING, LET THEM KNOW YOU ARE CONCERNED AND TELL A TRUSTED ADULT.

FACT: There are also physical consequences to drinking. Alcohol can cause bad breath and weight gain.

Information provided by: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, www.samhsa.gov

BULLYING

You may often hear about how to stop bullying at your school. You know the signs to watch for and how to intervene. BUT WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE THE BEHAVIOR IN YOURSELF? The signs are not always easy to recognize and sometimes we can be unaware of the effects we have on others.

THE GOOD & THE BAD ABOUT "GOING VIRAL"

It can be fun to get lots of likes and comments on what you post on social media. After all, you share what you do to communicate with your friends, and the feedback can be great. However, something you have posted -- or received -- can have negative consequences and get around to a lot of people very quickly.

IF YOU TAKE A FEW SIMPLE STEPS, YOU CAN BE SAFE.

- **DON'T ASSUME WHAT YOU WRITE OR POST WILL STAY PRIVATE OR DISAPPEAR.** Even if it's on a site where something disappears, what you post can be screenshotted and passed around for lots of people to see.
- **THINK ABOUT YOUR MOOD.** If you're mad at someone or in a bad mood, it's not a good time to post something publicly. Once you put something out there, you can't take it back.
- **DON'T RESPOND TO MEAN OR BULLYING MESSAGES.** You can use the block, flag or ignore features of many social media sites. Also be sure to get help from an adult.
- **BE AWARE OF WHAT FRIENDS POST.** If you see a warning sign that someone is depressed or thinking about hurting themselves, it is time to ACT. Show your friend that you care and tell a trusted adult.

More information: http://kidshealth.org/teen/safety/safebasics/internet_safety.html#

IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOURSELF OR A FRIEND, CALL THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE OR TEXT "HELLO" TO 741741 24/7.
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

STRUGGLING WITH YOUR GENDER OR SEXUALITY?

CONTACT THE TREVOR PROJECT'S FREE
HOTLINE: **866.488.7386**

This is a free, confidential phone service for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth. You can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You can also visit the Trevor Project at their website for information and resources:
THETREVORPROJECT.ORG

HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

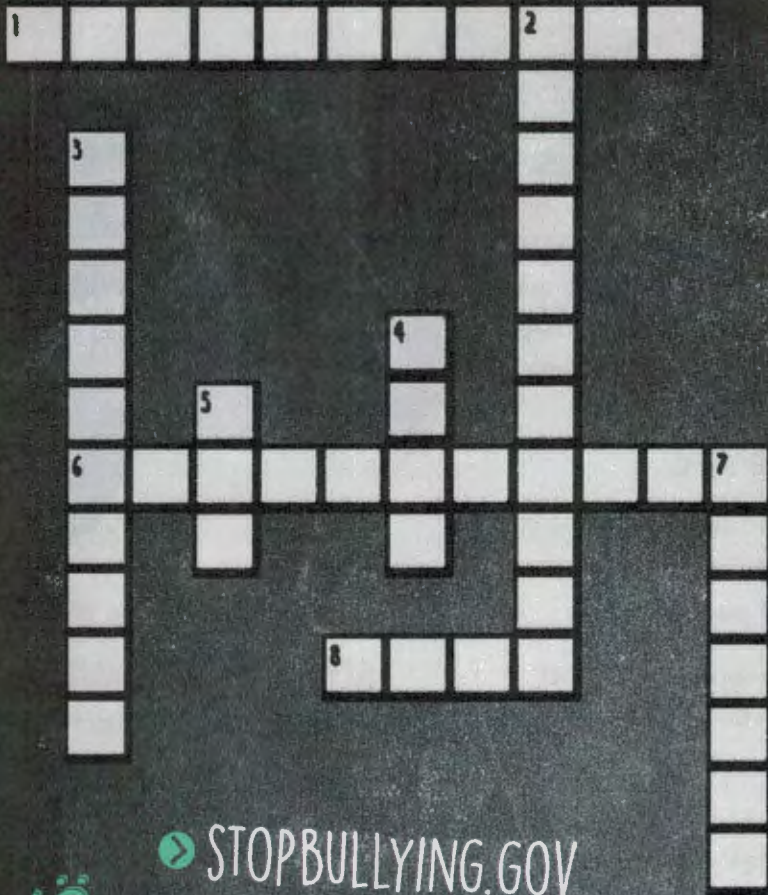
- **HAVE YOU BEEN BULLIED BY SOMEONE IN THE PAST?** You may feel like you have to make up for it by repeating the same destructive behavior to others.
- **DO YOU TRY TO AVOID THINKING ABOUT** how other people might feel if you say or do hurtful things to them?

IF YOU HAVE BEEN BULLIED BY OTHER PEOPLE,
TRY TO THINK ABOUT HOW YOU FELT.

HOW CAN YOU STOP BEING A BULLY?

- **APOLOGIZE** to those you have bullied and be friendly. It may take some time, but your peers will eventually see that you are sincere.
- **EXPLORE WAYS TO BOOST YOUR OWN SELF-ESTEEM** through a new hobby, volunteering, or playing sports.
- **IF YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE CONTROLLING YOUR ANGER** or other emotions, reach out to a trusted adult. They can help direct you to people and resources to get you back on a healthy path.

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. The phone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, a number you can call 24/7.
6. A place where people communicate their happiest and saddest feelings
8. The 'C' in ACT means this

DOWN

2. The 'A' in ACT means this
3. A long-lasting, strong feeling of sadness that is more than just a bad day or a bad week
4. The 'T' in ACT means this
5. What you do when you are worried about yourself or a friend and your/their mental health
7. A drug that, when used as a teen, can cause learning problems or lead to higher risk of addiction in adulthood

HELPFUL WEBSITES:

- ▶ STOPBULLYING.GOV
- ▶ KIDSHEALTH.ORG/TEEN
- ▶ TOOSMARTTOSTART.SAMHSA.GOV
- ▶ THECOOLSPOT.GOV

ANSWER KEY ACROSS: 1) 1800273TALK 6) Social Media 8) Care
DOWN: 2) Acknowledge 3) Depression 4) Tell 5) ACT 7) Alcohol

SELF-INJURY: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Do you have friends who injure (for example, cut or burn) their bodies on purpose? This may mean that your friends are hurting inside – from depression, anxiety, or something else. Signs of self-injury include hiding scars and wearing clothing to cover wounds. If you think your friend is hurting him or herself, it is important to ACT® – Acknowledge, Care, and Tell a trusted adult.

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OR TEXT "HELLO" TO 741741

