

Talking With Parents About Their Adolescent With Depression

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Collaboration between parents and school mental health professionals is crucial for students with serious depression. It is usually helpful to include adolescents in conversations with parents in order to respect the student's confidentiality and autonomy and to help maintain the connection with the adolescent.

PREPARING THE ADOLESCENT

- Discuss with the student about arranging to talk with his or her parents.
- Talk with the student about the goals of the meeting and preview what will be discussed with parents.
- Rehearse a conversation between the student and the parents about the student's experience of depression, what he or she is doing about it, and what is needed from the parents.

DURING THE MEETING

The following elements should be covered when talking with parents about their child's depression.

- Share the student's experience and symptoms of depression.
- Elicit parental observations.
- Describe the student's perception of contributing factors.
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- Provide an explanation of depression.
- Identify treatment options.
- Share the student's preferences and choices.
- Identify what is needed from the parents.
- Clarify the role of school mental health professionals in monitoring symptoms, providing interventions in the school setting, and optimizing the student's academic and social experience.