



CCS School Council Minutes
December 6, 2011

- i. Prayer and welcome
 - Harry Fritschy opened in prayer, Scott Hickling introduced the agenda and welcomed those attending
- ii. Approval of October 2011 minutes
 - noted that the presentation made at the November meeting will be delivered to MS and HS students
 - budget allocations from Alberta Education have been made and principals are making decisions on how to use those funds in the classroom as directed
 1. question about sustainability of this funding; SH answered that it likely is a one time influx, and that until the election occurs in the spring, it is unknown what the funding will look like in the future.
 - motion to approve minutes made by Jason Kupery, seconded by Melanie Kehler
- iii. Presentation from Marcia Hogg
 - excellent presentation by Family Liaison Counsellor, Marcia Hogg on depression and anxiety in adolescents
 - parents are encouraged to contact her for further information or referrals at any time Marcia.Hogg@pallisersd.ab.ca; also through the staff page on the CCS website.
 - Materials presented will follow the minutes
- iv. Questions regarding presentation – some discussion and questions were presented to Marcia
- v. Calendar Proposal and Directives from Palliser School Board (Palliser Trustee Colleen Dietz)

SH introduced the process and background to the gathering of information regarding the calendar proposals and directives; Colleen Dietz also reviewed the process from Palliser.

 - a. Summaries from staff and parent survey – presented the summary findings from the parent survey that was offered Dec 1 – 5 to CSCE Society and discussed the staff comments – presentation to follow minutes
 - b. Discussion/questions – some questions regarding the details of the proposals and discussion; reviewed the process for getting the information to the Palliser Board.
 - Noted that Palliser Board is meeting in December and in January and the calendar will be discussed and finalized, expecting to be approving final calendar at February Board meeting.
- vi. New business – no new business
- vii. Principal Comments – reiterated their positions and justification for calendar suggestions offered by CCS Admin
- viii. Next meeting – January 10, with presentation by Dr. C. Reid for HS students and parents regarding career counselling.

CSCCE School Council Agenda

- Prayer and welcome
- Approval of October 2011 minutes
- Presentation from Marcia Hogg
- Questions regarding presentation
- Calendar Proposal and Directives from Palliser School Board (Palliser Trustee Colleen Dietz)
 - Summaries from staff and parent survey
 - Discussion/questions
- New business
- Principal Comments
- Next meeting – January 10, with presentation by Dr. C. Reid for HS students and parents regarding career counselling.



CCS School Council Minutes

November 1, 2011

1. Prayer and welcome

Gwen Uittenbosch, Secondary Principal, opened in prayer

Scott welcomed all and introduced Palliser Trustee Colleen Dietz and Director of Learning for Inclusive Education (Palliser School Division), Laurie Wilson.

1. Approval of October 2011 minutes

Motioned and seconded by Stephanie Nabata and Philip Brouwer

1. Review of action items from minutes

i. HPV vaccine information – information has been forwarded to Board of Directors, immunizations for current year to continue as planned.

ii. School uniforms update – have intention from one parent to collect info and make presentation at a future meeting.

iii. Parking update – so far the new traffic pattern is working well; plans for continued communication and new signage to be added to the lot.

2. Upcoming events

i. POWER of ONE (auction November 4; event November 17)

ii. Open House November 29

iii. Christmas celebrations (November 30, December 14) – Note that the November 30 choral concert has been moved to December 21.

1. Colleen Dietz offered an update on expected funding from Alberta Education; all decisions on distribution have not been made yet, as all directives for funding not received from Alberta Ed at this time. Approximately \$1.19 million will be forthcoming to the Palliser School Division. At the next Palliser Board meeting, more will be discussed. Parents were invited to email Colleen at colleen.dietz@pallisersd.ab.ca if they have comments or questions.
2. Laurie Wilson outlined her role as a liaison for School Councils throughout the Division, and intends to help facilitate parent involvement and engagement.
3. Harry Fritschy introduced Monique Wagner as the VP for the Elementary while Glenda Jullion is on adoption leave.
4. Calgary Police Service Presentation on Internet Safety and Cyber bullying
 - i. See all relevant documents and links on the home tab for CCS School Council.
 - ii. Answered several questions from those attending specific to internet safety
5. General questions/new business – none at this time.
6. Next meeting is scheduled for December 6 at 7:00 pm and will include a presentation by Marcia Hogg, CCS Family Liaison Counsellor with information and tools about anxiety and depression in children.

CSCCE Society Responses

Palliser Board Directives

December 2011



Calgary Christian School

Palliser Board Directive #1 - The research-basis for our proposal:




Question: What does the research say about how we structure our school day?

Research informs us that children need time to eat lunch, play and transition between classes during their school day. Time spent at school is the longest part of a student’s day. Research supports that for overall development, children need time to socialize, to release their physical energies, and to work together in unstructured environments. While it is understood that children require supervision, the children need time to play together, build their own games/activities, and develop social skills in an unstructured environment.

A growing body of research speaks to the biological challenge for adolescent students to engage in their studies early in the morning. In fact research tells us that starting school at 9:30 or 10:00 am would be more helpful for adolescent students due to their “biological clocks”.

Recommendation: Appropriate recess and lunch breaks need to be built into school schedules.

1. Please check one of the following:

		Response Percent	Response Count
I agree with this recommendation		83.5%	96
I do not agree with this recommendation		12.2%	14
I have no opinion on this recommendation		4.3%	5
Please add any comments here:			41
answered question			115
skipped question			7

CCS Impact - Board Directive #1




Administration at CCS wholeheartedly agrees that appropriate breaks need to be included in the scheduling for a school timetable.

The implications of this Palliser Board directive may impact the start and end times for school days by mandating and directing the times for breaks and recesses. This could, in turn affect bussing schedules, extra-curricular participation and offerings, and delivery of certain programs at Calgary Christian.

Please note that Palliser Board Directive #3 speaks more specifically to this topic, and more information will be included there.

CCS Recommendation: For each school in the district, the appropriate timing and structure of breaks, lunches and recesses should be determined by the Administration of that school based on the needs and structure of the school, available staff and programs offered.

2. Please check one of the following:

		Response Percent	Response Count
I agree with this CCS recommendation		96.5%	111
I do not agree with this CCS recommendation		0.9%	1
I have no opinion on this CCS recommendation		2.6%	3

Please add any comments here: 17

answered question 115

skipped question 7




Palliser Board Directive #2 - School start and end times, including busing considerations:

Question: How do school calendars affect school start and end times?

Over the past few years several Palliser schools have re-allocated their hours to accommodate shortened Fridays and compressed weeks with four school days. In addition, some schools have scheduled “days-in-lieu” because shared bus routes with feeder schools have made for longer school days. The minimum number of board directed instructional hours, (960 hours for Elementary and Middle School, 1010 hours for High School, 480 for Kindergarten) has been compressed into fewer days. For schools with a four day week, those hours have to be squeezed into fewer days. The result is often a day that is over six hours in length. While this is a long day for students, it is even longer for our younger children. Kindergarten students are required to have longer school days because of earlier start times and later end times. The bus ride that many of our students experience compounds this problem. A large number of Palliser students are bused to and from school each day. The school day for children starts very early and ends very late with some students spending over an hour on the bus each way going to and from school.

Recommendation: School calendars to be structured to ensure that school not begin before 8:45 am and end no later than 3:35 pm.

3. Please check one of the following:

		Response Percent	Response Count
I agree with this recommendation		78.9%	90
I do not agree with this recommendation		14.0%	16
I have no opinion on this recommendation		7.0%	8
Please add any comments here:			23
answered question			114
skipped question			8

CCS Impact - Board Directive #2

Administration also agrees that it is important that daily school times are not too lengthy, especially for younger children.

The current timetable at CCS allows for early Friday dismissal and also ensures that the Monday - Thursday schedules fall within the recommended time frames.




The potential of this recommendation is that there would no longer be early dismissal on Fridays, which would impact the following:

- early Fridays are a mainstay of CCS culture and allow for families to spend a longer period of time together on the weekends.
- bus scheduling would need to be changed, costs may be affected and travel time increased for students on Friday afternoons (without early dismissal, busses would be travelling in the heaviest Friday traffic).
- Professional development and staff meetings that are now regularly scheduled for Friday afternoons would need to be cancelled, integrated into other PD times, or rescheduled altogether. The possibility of holding evening PD times and staff meetings would need to be explored, which would also have implications to the availability of staff for extra- and co-curricular activities and programs.
- potential of increased costs for maintenance and upkeep of the buildings and facilities. There are a large number of projects and regular maintenance that occur on Friday afternoons that would need to be rescheduled for other times, adding to the need for increased staffing after hours. This could also affect the number of students who are involved on the maintenance team.
- would result in an increase in missed class time for athletes travelling to other schools for games and tournaments, or fine arts students travelling for performances/workshops etc.
- may affect availability and delivery of extra-curricular programs as staff and students would have less available flex time throughout the week.
- may affect the ability to include some Kindergarten students in the cross-graded groups at the Elementary Campus.

CCS Recommendation: Each school should be encouraged to meet the recommended timetables to ensure that students are not subjected to longer than necessary school days or travel times. However, the Administration from individual schools should be allowed significant input to scheduling in order to create their schedules based on their programs, staff requirements, cultural "norms" for their communities, extra-curricular offerings, and other considerations that are specific to their school.

CCS Impact - Board Directive #2

4. Please check one of the following:

		Response Percent	Response Count
I agree with this CCS recommendation		91.2%	104
I do not agree with this CCS recommendation		5.3%	6
I have no opinion on this CCS recommendation		3.5%	4
Please add any comments here:			24
answered question			114
skipped question			8

Palliser Board Directive #3 - Length of time between classes, recess breaks and lunch hours:

Question: How do calendars that schools have affect break times for students?

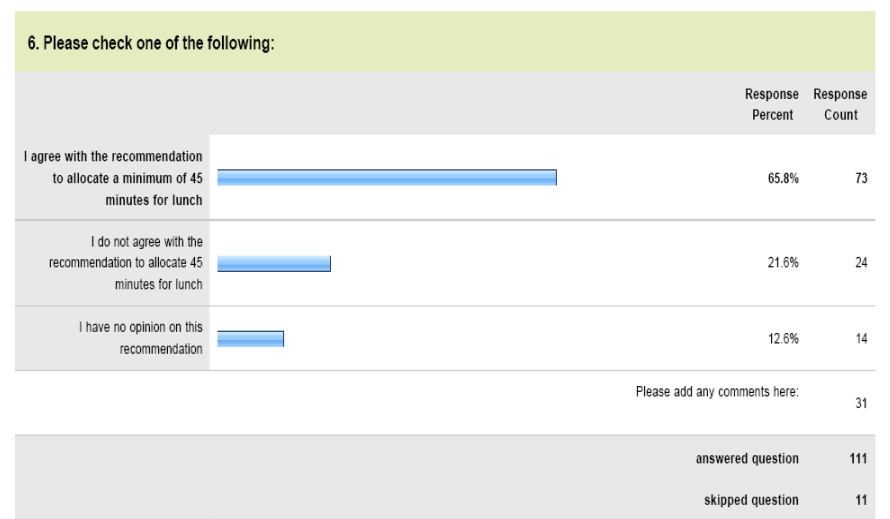
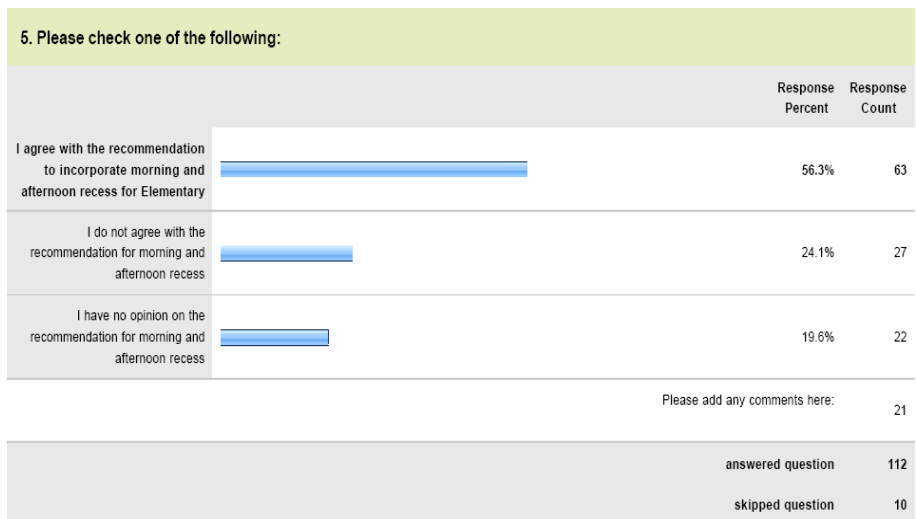
Break time between classes is not instructional time and needs to reflect the amount of time students need to move from class to class.

Calendar choice needs to reflect an appropriate amount of time for students to eat lunch and have a break. Presently the amount of time allocated for lunch varies from thirty to fifty minutes. Student feedback during school reviews urged schools to provide more time for lunch. Students sometimes feel rushed to finish eating in order to maximize their short break. Where appropriate, there needs to be enough time for students to travel to and from school during lunch hour. Palliser has witnessed the reduction or elimination of intramural programming due in part to time constraints.

A reasonable amount of time is needed for recess breaks for younger children. There must be time for students to put on winter clothing and play. In addition, there needs to be recesses both in the morning and afternoon that are unstructured and allow children to socially develop, play, and have a break.

Recommendation: School calendars incorporate two 15 minute recess periods for elementary children, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Recommendation: A minimum of forty-five (45) minutes be allocated for lunch in school calendars.



CCS Impact - Board Directive #3



CCS Administration agrees that there must be adequate and appropriate time for breaks and lunch during the school day.

In order to maintain a similar weekly schedule (including early dismissal on Fridays), we may propose and discuss the following for CCS:

For Elementary School: Maintain the current 20 minute morning recess. Schedule a 45 minute lunch break that includes 25 minutes of recess time. Each class currently has 45 minutes of Phys Ed class and/or Daily Physical Activity scheduled each day in addition to recess times.

For Middle and High School: Sharing of the facilities and teaching staff must be taken into consideration in the planning between Middle and High School, and the scheduling of breaks and lunch affects both.

CCS recommendation: Each school will know best how to serve their students and how to incorporate physical activity and unstructured play into their day. Both Phys Ed classes and Daily Physical Activity time must also be taken into account when calculating the time for physical exercise that is provided for students. Determining the recess, lunch and break schedule at each school should be a site-based decision by the Administration of the school.

7. Please check one of the following:		Response Percent	Response Count
I agree with this CCS recommendation		91.9%	102
I do not agree with this CCS recommendation		5.4%	6
I have no opinion on this CCS recommendation		2.7%	3
Please add any comments here:			16
		answered question	111
		skipped question	11




Palliser Board Directive #4 - School timetable/day commonalities for video conferencing.

Question: How could common calendars affect programming options for students?

Palliser is committed to providing expanded programming options for students. There are increasing challenges to rural schools because of declining student populations. Offering a variety of programming options is often cited as a reason for parents to choose one school over another. Consistent timetables and calendars would allow for a greater use of video conferencing in schools to increase student programming opportunities. Video conferencing has been used to supplement second language options, and high school courses.

Recommendation: School calendars reflect commonalities across the division. The option would enhance the program offerings in our smaller rural schools, thus enhancing their viability.

8. Please check one of the following:




		Response Percent	Response Count
I agree with this recommendation		38.9%	42
I do not agree with this recommendation		27.8%	30
I have no opinion on this recommendation		33.3%	36
	Please add any comments here:		15
	answered question		108
	skipped question		14

CCS Impact - Board Directive #4

CCS does participate in the delivery of video-conferencing programs to other Palliser schools and works closely with them to be able to deliver those programs.

CCS Recommendation: Schools that are specifically partnered or linked through the delivery of video-conferencing programs should coordinate their schedules and calendars in order to be effective and enhance the ability to deliver increased programs and classes to students. This does not automatically require, however, that ALL schools in the Palliser Division have a common calendar to allow for this collaboration.

9. Please check one of the following:

		Response Percent	Response Count
I agree with this recommendation		85.5%	94
I do not agree with this recommendation		2.7%	3
I have no opinion on this recommendation		11.8%	13
Please add any comments here:			10
answered question			110
skipped question			12

The 2012/2013 draft school calendar from Palliser takes the following Palliser priorities into consideration:




- 1. Site-based professional development days are the same hours as a full school day. Four site-based days: two for DIP/PAT and Pillar analysis, and two that accommodate school choice.**
- 2. Opening Ceremonies: Thursday, August 30. Teachers will have Friday, August 31 in their school before students start.**
- 3. Collaborative Professional Development Days: All of the collaborative days have been placed on Fridays and it is anticipated that the sessions will operate from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. This will allow for more frequent collaboration while giving travel time for teachers and staff.**

Calgary Christian School Administration would like to offer the following regarding the proposed calendar:





- 1. There is an increased and inherent risk to having large numbers of teaching staff from all schools travelling more frequently for collaborative PD days.**
- 2. The addition of collaborative and site based professional days to 14 results in increased time away from the classroom and students.**
- 3. Increased collaborative time can certainly be beneficial, but there also needs to be allowance made for the implementation of any learned skills or enhanced program delivery following these PD days.**
- 4. We recommend that the use of video teleconferencing or other technology may be a solution to save travelling time and reduce risks while maintaining and potentially increasing the ability for staff to learn and grow with each other and implement any new programs and ideas.**

Note that the proposed calendar includes the suggestion to have classes begin on September 4. When classes began in August at CCS (and other schools) in previous years, it was one way that the instructional hours could be met without "losing" our early dismissal on Fridays. Please keep in mind that to include a start date after Labour Day would require compromise elsewhere.

10. Please check one of the following:

		Response Percent	Response Count
I agree with the suggestions and recommendations regarding the calendar that are offered by the CCS Administration		82.7%	86
I do not agree with the suggestions and recommendations offered by CCS Administration		9.6%	10
I have no opinion on the suggestions and recommendations offered by CCS Administration		7.7%	8
	Please add any comments here:		27
		answered question	104
		skipped question	18

11. If you would like to leave your name and the grade levels that your children are in, contact information or any further comments, please do so here:

		Response Percent	Response Count
Name		86.4%	51
Grade levels		94.9%	56
Contact information		64.4%	38
Comments		35.6%	21
		answered question	59
		skipped question	63

Elementary Staff

Professional Days	Christmas and Spring Break	Lunch and Recess	In Lieu Days	Friday dismissal	Other
More PD scheduled than required - many part-time teaching staff do not work on Fridays	Unnecessary to have two full weeks for breaks - hard for students to transition back into routine	Time required to prepare, especially ES students, for recess must be considered	Scheduling in lieu days as part of Spring Break does not accomplish their intended purpose	Early dismissal on Fridays allows time for meetings, personal planning etc and for balance and family time for staff as well as students	Learning Assistant time with students is already insufficient for many students - lengthening the weeks (or the days) will negatively impact students further
Potential for the Calgary schools to meet together rather than the whole Division at times? Use video-conferencing for collaboration?	Possibility to shorten breaks in order to accommodate more instructional time	DPA (and other creative solutions to incorporate movement) can give the opportunity to be active without impacting instructional time	In lieu days should be scheduled the same week that the additional work is completed	Would impact the Kindergarten program in scheduling class time and participation	Coordination of timetables and calendars with video-conferencing schools is important for students at both schools as the delivery of the program can only happen when both are in attendance
More PD days prior to the beginning of school (IN the school) would be beneficial		Learning momentum and focused time is important to consider - too many breaks can interrupt this process	Potential for holding P/T interviews on two dates in two separate weeks?	Would affect many school and afterschool programs - hockey before and after, sports teams/tournaments, chapel time/prime time, PD, staff meetings (and both student and staff ability to participate)	Ability to attend the entirety of the PCCE Teacher's Convention is important to CCS in delivering the Christian perspective component of our program
To parents it may feel like more weeks are 4 days than 5 with so many Fridays scheduled off, and therefore LESS instructional time; the number of PD days is some of the cause for longer days		Need to consider getting students back on track after a significant break; longer, uninterrupted afternoon work time would be more effective for students			Extending days for staff to allow for regularly scheduled PD and planning time and staff meetings would impact their personal commitments to family and community as well as their own workload and health
Number of PD days directly affects instructional time and programs offered on Fridays (curricular and co-curricular)		Would impact supervision work loads			
Site days are more effective than collaborative days; allows time for implementation		Enough time to eat and have a break is important; teachers could also benefit from more time to eat and have a break			
Expensive to travel for so many collaborative days and travelling by school bus is not honouring to staff (noisy, cold, uncomfortable)		Afternoon recess would likely be most beneficial for the youngest students, not as often required or beneficial for older ES			
Potential for the equal time of one site-based PD day that is scheduled to be a combination of current Friday afternoon site PD					
More PD days, with shortened hours, is not an effective use of time					

Middle High School Staff

- We would like to have three days set aside for our teachers convention in October
- There are an excessive number of days (Fridays) set aside for us to meet in Vulcan
- Our desire is to have permission to have one of our site-based PD days be our August day in Canmore as it has a PD/visioning focus and the other site- based day be spread out over our Friday afternoons.
- We do not want our PD days on Fridays - it affects our school culture: Friday morning adult hockey, Friday afternoon student hockey, bussing our kids home - late arrival, sports teams will be affected - coaches will not be at PD or have to leave early, will have to move our MS chapel times and Prime Time, have to have staff meetings and other Friday PD one day after school in order to meet our school objectives.

UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSED AND ANXIOUS MIDDLE-SCHOOLERS

By Marcia Hogg
Family School Liaison Counsellor

December 6, 2011

purpose of presentation



- To create awareness of problem and normalize it; no difference between Christian and secular families for risk of anxiety / depression
- To show risks associated with untreated anxiety and depression
- To direct you toward further education and resources

first... a few reminders about adolescents

- they are **entertaining** and fun!
- they are **passionate**
- easily dedicated to a **Cause**
- searching for **identity**
- **open** and aware
- **learning** comes more easily to teens than to adults
- they are **Creative** and are learning to think abstractly



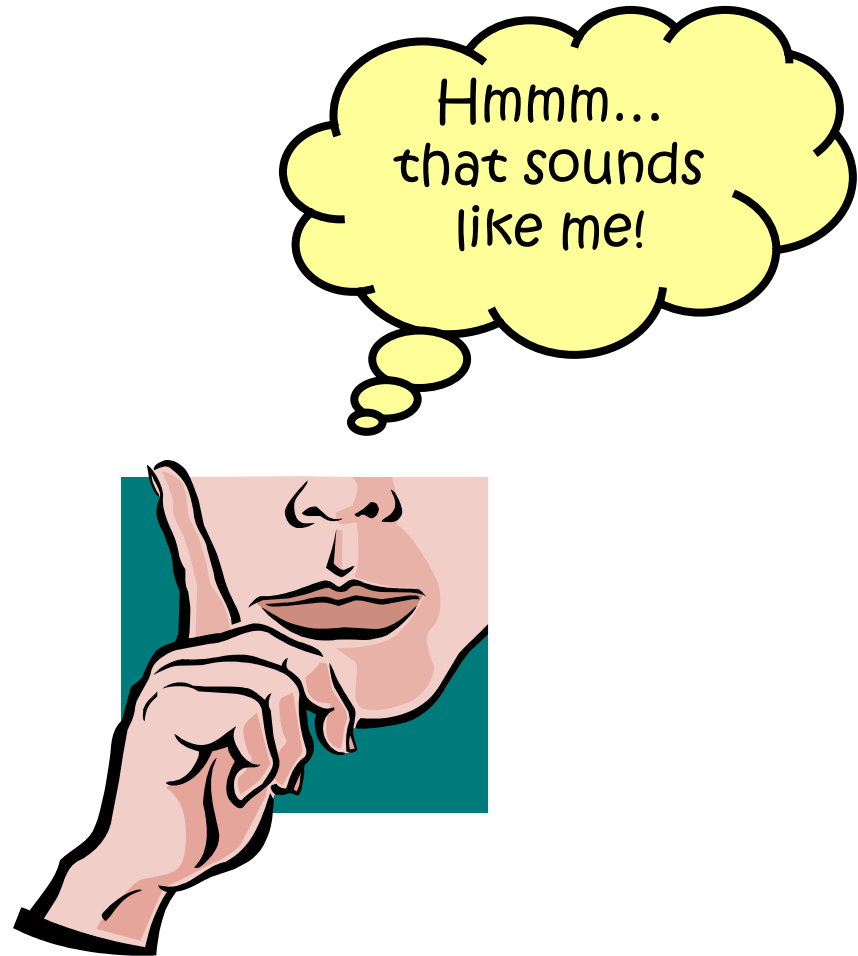
emotional development of adolescents

- they can be **emotional**, moody, irritable due to hormonal changes
- often respond with **anger** or **sarCaSm**
- they struggle with delayed **gratification** and want everything now!
- teens can be **impulsive**
- they have a difficult time envisioning the future
- they are often **self-absorbed**



What are they trying to achieve?

- Adolescents have the unique task of differentiating themselves from others and finding out who they are and who they want to be



Why are young people more susceptible?

- they are **not** “little adults”
- they have little experience to draw on
- easily triggered
- they have less-developed coping strategies than adults
- their impulsivity makes them vulnerable when feeling emotionally volatile



So, is it just teenage angst, or serious **depression** ?

- It may be difficult to differentiate between normal adolescent mood swings and **Clinical depression**, but here are some symptoms to watch for:



emotional symptoms

- persistent sad mood (*)
- **irritability / hostility**
- **disinterest / boredom**
- excessive **worry**
- **sensitivity to criticism**
- **withdrawal & insecurity**
- feelings of helplessness, worthlessness, inadequacy
- **guilt**
- **self-loathing and shame**

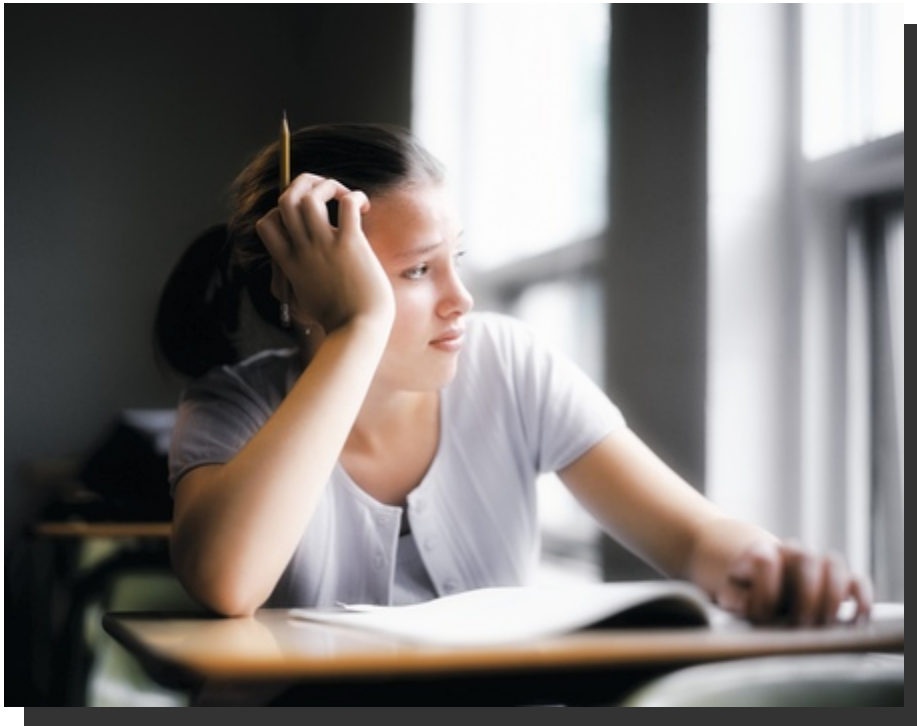


physical symptoms

- **difficulty sleeping**
- significant weight loss or gain
- slowed body movements
- loss of energy
- **fatigue**
- non-specific physical aches and pains
 - headaches
 - stomach aches
 - back pain
 - serotonin and pain perception



cognitive symptoms



- impaired judgment
- slowed thinking
- **inability to concentrate**
- dwelling on failures
- recurrent thoughts of suicide or death
- inefficiency at school
- short-term memory loss
- delusional thinking
- inability to think abstractly

spiritual symptoms

- extreme shame and guilt
- feeling condemned by God or neglected
- feeling **angry at God** because he isn't rescuing them from their emotions
- questioning traditional values

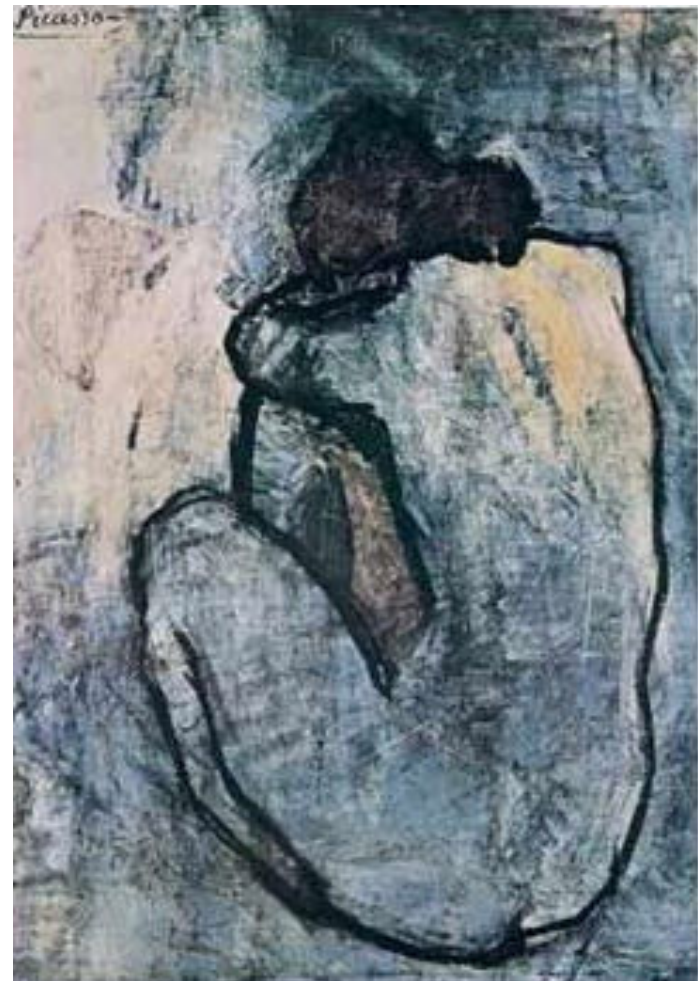


to summarize, so far

- everyone feels down sometimes, but depression is beyond having a “blue day”.

It is a **whole body** condition that impacts us

- ▣ body
- ▣ mind
- ▣ soul



depression triggers: biochemical causes



- family history
- environmental toxins
- low immunity
- drug and alcohol use

- health related habits:
 - poor nutrition
 - lack of exercise
 - lack of sleep
- hormonal imbalances
 - PMS
 - hypothyroidism
- disease:
 - low blood sugar
 - autoimmune diseases

depression triggers: temperament



- low self esteem
 - helpless / dependent
 - perceive selves as victims
- pessimistic
- perfectionist
 - driven
 - shaped by families to measure their self-worth by achievement

depression triggers: difficult life events



- **experiencing loss**
 - academic failures
 - illness or death
 - divorce of parents
 - breakup with boy/girlfriend
- **adjusting to change**
 - change of status within peer group
 - changing schools
 - moving to a new house
 - parent's new relationship

prevalence of adolescent depression

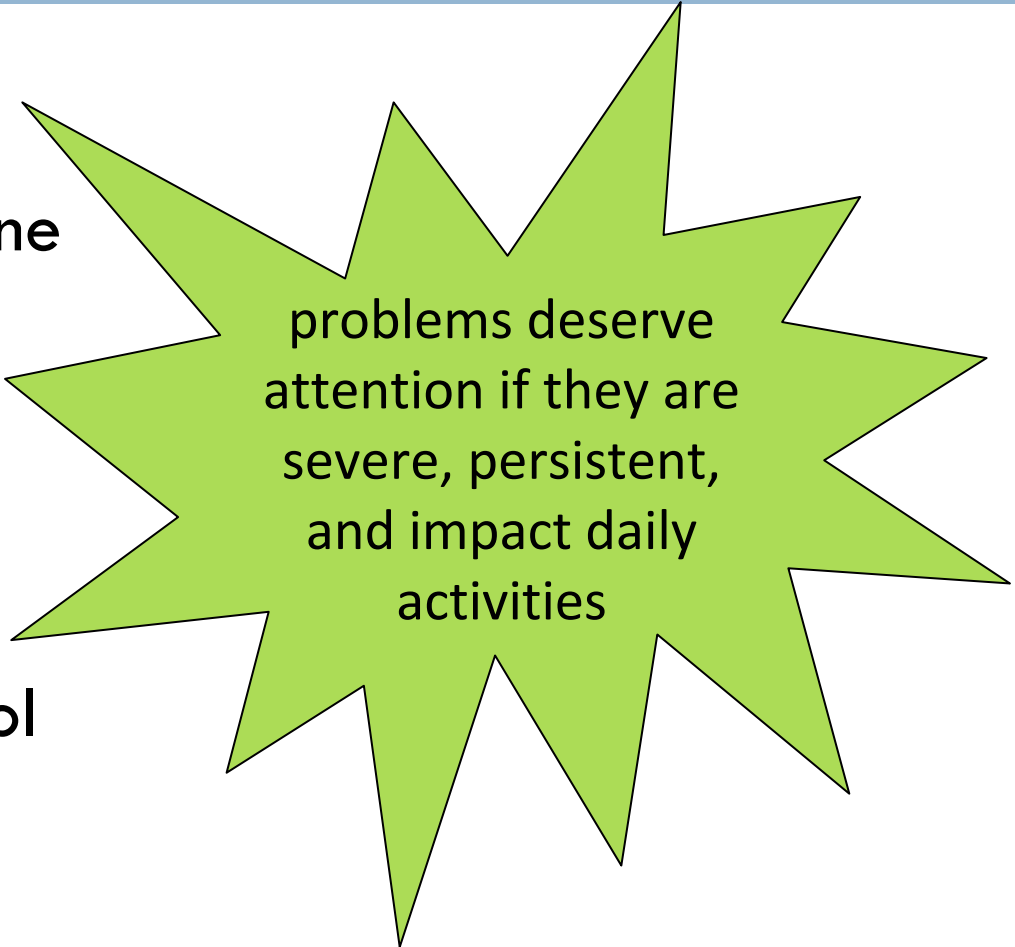


- **15-20%** of adolescents will experience at least one severe episode of depression during teen years (LD kids at greater risk)
- **girls** are **3X** more likely to develop depression than boys
- **boys'** depression usually presents as “Oppositional Defiance Disorder” (ODD)

source: Dr. Glenda MacQueen and Dr. Gary Hnatko: Univ of Calgary

How long will depression last?

- untreated: usually 6-9 months
- longer, if youth is prone to mood disorder
- longer, if response to treatment is slow
- untreated, depression can last a whole school year!



problems deserve attention if they are severe, persistent, and impact daily activities

brain biology of depression

□ **one theory:**

depression is the result of under-activity of three brain chemicals:

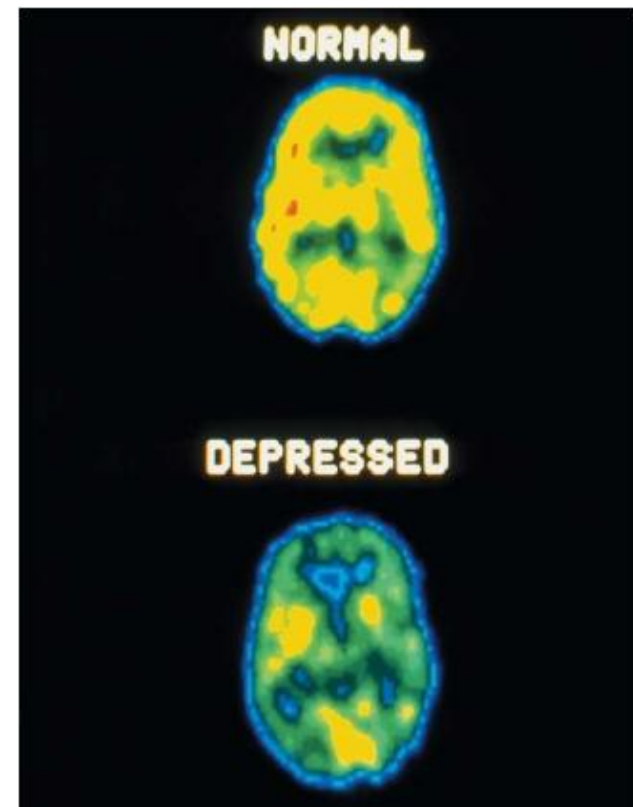
- dopamine
- norepinephrine
- serotonin

- the timing and growth rates of certain areas of the brain during adolescence can impact the likelihood of depression

<http://www.teen-depression.info/overview/biology/>

the impact of depression on adolescent brain development

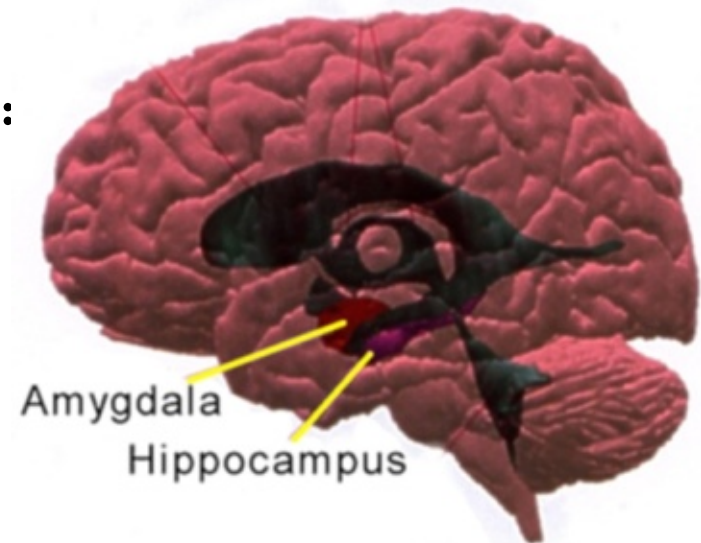
- adolescents' brains continue to grow until about age 24
- studies have shown that depression can “re-wire” the brain, creating cognitive impairment
- depression needs to be taken seriously, since lifelong brain function is at stake



Source: Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, June 15, 1999

impact on the brain's limbic system

- studies have shown up to 13% reduction of volume in the **hippocampus** in depressed individuals: the region of the brain responsible for the formation of memory
- too much cortisol—a stress hormone, also shrinks the hippocampus
- the **amygdala** —the region responsible for fear and aggression— is also aggravated





the anxiety connection

- What do kids possibly have to be anxious about?
 - no bills to pay
 - no real obligations
 - no bosses to answer to...

“The Myth of a Happy Childhood” by Nancy Schimelpfening identifies many childhood stressors...

the link between anxiety and depression

- **Depression** can be a response to loss, real or imagined
 - health
 - parents' marriage
 - friendship conflicts
 - academic failures
 - moving...
- **Anxiety** is often about the fear of impending loss
 - what if I get sick again?
 - what if dad leaves?
 - what if my friend ditches me again?
 - what if we move again?
 - what if I fail this course?

social stresses



- peer pressure
- fitting in
- bullying
- social exclusion
- boyfriend / girlfriend struggles
- fear of the future

family stresses

- family conflict
- financial problems
- divorce
- moving
- chronic illness
- parents' stress filtering down
- parents' preoccupation with their troubles



puberty-related stressors

- lack of independence and desire for control
- arguments with parents
- increase in sex hormones
- competition for place within social order



environmental stressors

- noisy neighbors
- lockdown drills
- bus rides
- bad weather
- pollution
- overcrowding
- fear of crime
- bad news
- unpleasant school or work environment



symptoms of stress

PHYSICAL

- headaches
- rashes
- stomachaches
- shakiness
- perspiration
- increased urination
- rapid heartbeat
- feeling fidgety
- exhaustion

MENTAL

- lack of concentration
- forgetfulness
- inability to study
- carelessness
- preoccupation
- procrastination
- ruminating
- insomnia

symptoms of stress

EMOTIONAL

- angry outbursts
- irritability
- nightmares
- depression
- fear / paranoia
- increased sensitivity
- insecurity

BEHAVIOR

- withdrawal from others
- conflict in relationships
- disruptive behavior
- substance abuse
- food cravings
- frequent crying
- nail biting

What can I do to help?

- truly listen to your children and believe them
- acknowledge that times have changed
- respond to body, mind, heart, spiritual impact
- regularly TALK to your kids about their emotional state; find out how they're doing.
- acknowledge the hurt / pain / fear / stress
- model effective ways of dealing with stress and sadness
- watch for self-medicating with drugs / alcohol

What can I do to help?

- provide alternatives to wallowing in self pity:
 - physical exercise
 - relaxation strategies
 - a balanced diet
 - healthy socialization
 - spiritual interventions
 - supplements *
 - a visit to your doctor
 - brainstorming solutions, breaking tasks into chunks

* See print resources from AHS and Focus on the Family

Symptoms of Depression

depressed mood	feeling hopeless, sad, discouraged, or empty inside
loss of interest or pleasure	inability to experience pleasure; boredom; nothing seems to interest you anymore, including former hobbies, social activities, and sex
appetite or weight changes	significant weight loss or weight gain – a change of more than 5% of body weight in a month
sleep changes	insomnia or oversleeping (known as hypersomnia)
psychomotor agitation or retardation	feeling “keyed up”, unable to sit still, anxious, and restless OR feeling sluggish, slowed speech and body movements, and a lack of normal responsiveness
fatigue or loss of energy	feeling physically drained. Even small tasks are exhausting. Feeling like you can’t do things as quickly as you used to.
self-loathing	strong feelings of worthlessness or guilt. Harsh criticism of perceived faults and mistakes
concentration problems	Inability to focus; difficulty making decisions; can’t “think straight”; memory problems
irritability	grouchy, easily annoyed; frustrated by things; angry outbursts
aches and pains	depression can cause or exacerbate many physical symptoms, including headaches, backaches, diarrhea, or constipation, abdominal pain, and aching joints

The Difference between Teenage and Adult Depression

from helpguide.org

Depression in teens can look very different from depression in adults. The following symptoms of depression are more common in teenagers than in their adult counterparts:

Irritable or angry mood

- As noted above, irritability, rather than sadness, is often the predominant mood in depressed teens. A depressed teenager may be grumpy, hostile, easily frustrated, or prone to angry outbursts.

Unexplained aches and pains

- Depressed teens frequently complain about physical ailments such as headaches or stomachaches. If a thorough physical exam does not reveal a medical cause, these aches and pains may indicate depression.

Extreme sensitivity to criticism

- Depressed teens are plagued by feelings of worthlessness, making them extremely vulnerable to criticism, rejection, and failure. This is a particular problem for “over-achievers.”

Withdrawing from some, but not all people

- While adults tend to isolate themselves when depressed, teenagers usually keep up at least some friendships. However, teens with depression may socialize less than before, pull away from their parents, or start hanging out with a different crowd.

Sleep disturbances

- It is not uncommon for depressed teens to sleep excessively and still feel exhausted or to struggle with insomnia. Fatigue is a major symptom for youth.

Remember, behaviors like irritability and withdrawal, in depressed kids, are not intentionally directed toward you but are an indication that they are feeling worthless and insecure.

Dealing with Suicidal Thoughts (teen handout)

If your feelings become so overwhelming that you can't see any solution besides harming yourself or others, you need to get help *right away*. And yet, asking for help when you're in the midst of such strong emotions can be really tough. If talking to a stranger might be easier for you, call the Kids' Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868 to speak confidentially to someone who can understand and help you deal with your feelings.

In the meantime, the following suggestions can help get you through until you feel ready to talk to someone:

There is ALWAYS another solution, even if you can't see it right now.

- Many kids who have attempted suicide (and survived) say that they did it because they mistakenly felt there was no other solution to a problem they were experiencing. At the time, they could not see another way out, but in truth, they didn't really want to die. Remember that no matter how horribly you feel, these emotions will pass.

Having thoughts of hurting yourself or others does not make you a bad person.

- Depression can make you think and feel things that are out of character. No one should judge you or condemn you for these feelings if you are brave enough to talk about them.

If your feelings are uncontrollable, tell yourself to wait 24 hours before you take any action.

- This can give you time to really think things through and give yourself some distance from the strong emotions that are plaguing you. During this 24-hour period, try to talk to someone—anyone—as long as they are not another suicidal or depressed person. Call a hotline or talk to a friend. What do you have to lose?

If you're afraid you can't control yourself, make sure you are never alone.

- Even if you can't verbalize your feelings, just stay in public places, hang out with friends or family members, or go to a movie—anything to keep from being by yourself and in danger.

Above all, do not do anything that could result in permanent damage or death to yourself or others. Remember, suicide is a "permanent solution to a temporary problem." Help is available. All you need to do is take that first step and reach out.