

Should All Kids Be Screened for Depression? This Expert Says Yes and Explains How it Can Save Lives

According to a new report from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, teenagers should be routinely screened by doctors for depression. The group said that all 12- to 18-year-olds should fill out screening questionnaires that can show potential risk for depression and suicidal tendencies. While there is a great deal of focus on the physical health of kids, the mental and emotional health of children does not receive nearly as much attention. Considering that 10% of kids have emotional disorders, it is important to ensure that they receive the professional treatment they need in a timely manner.

As psychotherapist and author, **Terry Diebold**, sees all too frequently that it is common for preteen and teen depression to remain undiagnosed for a variety of reasons. Kids are going through a tremendous number of physical and emotional changes and often don't realize that what they are experiencing is depression. Undiagnosed depression can be dangerous if a tragic event, such as a suicide in the community, triggers a child's own thoughts of suicide.

While parents and teachers work together to help kids, routine screening of all kids can help professionals to recognize and treat problems more quickly. Invite Diebold to explain the challenges of this issue including the following:

- Parents tend to be in denial about their own kids and often miss warning signs.
- Kids are reluctant to discuss emotional problems with their parents.
- Teen behavior is often dismissed as hormonal when it may be more serious.
- Medication alone doesn't work, so counseling is also needed.
- Testing gets parents involved and family counseling is the most effective treatment.

CREDENTIALS: Terry Diebold is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) and a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC). She also holds a Master's degree in Divinity and is an ordained Presbyterian minister. Diebold created a crime victims' treatment program in Kentucky and worked with at-risk children in schools. She has also worked with prison inmates and battered women. She is a successful speaker and the author of the book, *THE MYTH OF SELF ESTEEM: 50 Ways to Stop Sabotaging Yourself*. Diebold is the President of the Virginia Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and has served on its board for the past six years. She hosts a weekly radio show *Relatively Speaking* on www.webtalkradionetwork.com. She has recently been quoted in

The Washington Post and appeared in *Front Porch Fredericksburg Magazine*, and has been selected for Cambridge's Who's Who 2009-2010.

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