

[Video Link](#)

[Topic Playlist](#)

Watch Time: 3:17 minutes

Read Time: 1 minute (approximately)

Erica Leibrandt, LCPC Sound Mind Counseling:

While there are textbook things to look for, which I will explain momentarily, it's important to say that sometimes it's hard to know the difference. We want things to be black and white. We want to know what's happening, but we can't always know what's happening with our teens. We can sometimes only make educated guesses. Some teens look depressed and they're actually kind of okay, and other teens look kind of okay, and they're actually pretty depressed. We need to be pretty forgiving towards ourselves as parents if we don't catch everything and we don't want to fall into that trap of hovering over our child thinking that the more we hover, the more we're going to understand them. That just pushes them away from us. There's always going to be an element of fallibility in how we assess what's going on with our teen, and that's totally okay.

In terms of clinical definitions, things to look for are weight loss or gain, intense irritability, like lashing out or just shutting down, isolating, potentially self-harm and sleep patterns changing, sleeping a lot more and looking for these things not to be happening just in a day or two, but to be sustained, at least two of them sustained over the course of at least two weeks. If you see two or more of those symptoms I just mentioned sustained over the course of two or more weeks, it's likely that there's a clinical issue going on. At which point I would intervene with the conversation, the [three-part icebreaker](#), and just kind of see where that leads you. For more information about the signs and symptoms of depression, you can go to [NIMH, the National Institute for Mental Health](#). That website is an absolute wealth of information and it can give you a very detailed rundown of what you should be looking for.