

Sad or irritable mood, decreased interest in activities, change in appetite or sleeping pattern, loss of energy, or feelings of worthlessness – these are all signs and symptoms of depression. Clinical depression affects more than 19 million people across America each year. Depression can affect a person's ability to function regularly and lead a productive life. If depression goes untreated, it can cause serious mental and medical complications for individuals. Some ignore the signs of depression as just being 'moody' or 'under the weather', when, in reality, they are dealing with a treatable illness. Although depression can be treated with prescribed medication, there are several other behavioral interventions that can treat depression as well.

The National Depression Screening day is held in October during National Mental Illness Awareness week. The screening is not a diagnosis of depression, but rather a tool that is used to identify if a person is possibly experiencing depression. During a screening information about depression will be discussed, a mental health professional administers a 5 minute screening tool and discusses the results of the screening. If needed, recommendations for further care are suggested.

Norris will be participating in recognizing this illness by offering depression screenings throughout the month of October. Depression screenings will be available for all Middle School and High School students who have obtained parental consent. The Life Coach, Jill Rice, will be administering the screenings and will discuss the results with the student as well as the student's parent(s). All screenings and results are confidential. Those interested in participating in the screening process should contact a school administrator or Jill Rice to receive the parental consent form.

If you/your child regularly experience the following symptoms (especially if they have shown these symptoms for 2 weeks or more), please consider participating in the screening:

- Persistent sadness and/or hopelessness or irritable mood
- Decreased or diminished interest or pleasure in activities
- Significant change in appetite (eating more or less) or body weight
- Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- Physical slowing or agitation as observed by others
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt
- Difficulty thinking or concentrating or indecisiveness
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide