

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO

# DEPRESSION & ANXIETY



Connecting Parents, Teens & Jesus  
in a Disconnected World

# AXIS PARENT GUIDES SERIES

A Parent's Guide to Teen FOMO

A Parent's Guide to Influencers

A Parent's Guide to Instagram

A Parent's Guide to TikTok

A Parent's Guide to YouTube

A Parent's Guide to Teen Identity

A Parent's Guide to LGBTQ+ & Your Teen

A Parent's Guide to Body Positivity

A Parent's Guide to Eating Disorders

A Parent's Guide to Fear & Worry

A Parent's Guide to the Sex Talk

A Parent's Guide to Pornography

A Parent's Guide to Sexual Assault

A Parent's Guide to Suicide & Self-Harm  
Prevention

A Parent's Guide to Depression & Anxiety

## **PARENT GUIDE BUNDLES**

Parent Guides to Social Media

Parent Guides to Finding True Identity

Parent Guides to Mental & Sexual Health

# **A PARENT'S GUIDE TO DEPRESSION & ANXIETY**



A PARENT'S GUIDE TO

# DEPRESSION & ANXIETY

axis



Tyndale House Publishers  
Carol Stream, Illinois

Visit Tyndale online at [tyndale.com](http://tyndale.com).

*Tyndale* and Tyndale's quill logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Ministries.

*A Parent's Guide to Depression & Anxiety*

Copyright © 2023 by Axis. All rights reserved.

Cover illustration by Lindsey Bergsma. Copyright © Tyndale House Ministries. All rights reserved.

Designed by Lindsey Bergsma

Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, *New International Version*,<sup>®</sup> *NIV*.<sup>®</sup> Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.<sup>®</sup> Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Tyndale House Publishers at [csresponse@tyndale.com](mailto:csresponse@tyndale.com), or call 1-855-277-9400.

#### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN 978-1-4964-6770-6

Printed in the United States of America

29	28	27	26	25	24	23
7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Every child, every person needs to know that they are a source of joy; every child, every person, needs to be celebrated. Only when all of our weaknesses are accepted as part of our humanity can our negative, broken self-images be transformed.

**JEAN VANIER, *BECOMING HUMAN***



# CONTENTS

A Letter from Axis .....	x
The “Black Dog” .....	1
An Important Note .....	7
What Are Depression and Anxiety?.....	13
Are Depressed and Anxious Teens Just Experiencing Normal Ups and Downs?.....	19
What Causes Depression and Anxiety? .....	27
What Are the Spiritual Ramifications?.....	31
How Can My Church or Pastor Help?.....	37

How Will I Know If My Teen Suffers from Depression or Anxiety?.....	45
What Types of Treatments Are There?.....	53
How Can I Support My Teen's Treatment?.....	63
A Final Encouragement .....	75
Recap .....	79
Discussion Questions .....	83
Additional Resources .....	87
Notes.....	91

# A LETTER FROM AXIS

*Dear Reader,*

We're Axis, and since 2007, we've been creating resources to help connect parents, teens, and Jesus in a disconnected world. We're a group of gospel-minded researchers, speakers, and content creators, and we're excited to bring you the best of what we've learned about making meaningful connections with the teens in your life.

This parent's guide is designed to help start a conversation. Our goal is to give you enough knowledge that you're able to ask your teen informed questions about their world. For each guide, we spend weeks reading, researching, and interviewing parents and teens in order to distill everything you need to know about the topic at hand. We encourage you to read the whole thing and then to use the questions we include to get the conversation going with your teen—and then to follow the conversation wherever it leads.

As Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen point out in their book *Difficult Conversations*, “Changes in attitudes and behavior rarely come about because of arguments, facts, and attempts to persuade. How often do *you* change your values and beliefs—or whom you love or what you want in life—based on something someone tells you? And how likely are you to do so when the person who is trying to change you doesn’t seem fully aware of the reasons you see things differently in the first place?”<sup>1</sup> For whatever reason, when we believe that others are trying to understand *our* point of view, our defenses usually go down, and we’re more willing to listen to *their* point of view. The rising generation is no exception.

So we encourage you to ask questions, to listen, and then to share your heart with your teen. As we often say at Axis, discipleship happens where conversation happens.

Sincerely,  
Your friends at Axis

---

<sup>1</sup> Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen, *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), 137.



# THE “BLACK DOG”

**TEENS TEST-DRIVE** a variety of emotions every day, and sometimes they have no idea how to explain or express them. We've all heard (or even said) something like, "I'm so depressed! They canceled my favorite show!" or "I'm so anxious about my math test!" The language of mental illness runs rampant through our casual conversations. It's not all that surprising, though. These days it's like everyone on earth has a microphone, and with the racket of everyone's opinions, hyperbole seems a useful method for getting heard. The louder the noise, the less others want to listen, so we sometimes use exaggerations to describe how we feel and to connect with others.

But things like depression and anxiety are no exaggerations. Rick Warren, pastor of one of the largest evangelical churches in the US and author of one of the top

bestsellers in history (*The Purpose Driven Life*), lost his son Matthew to suicide after a long battle with a serious depression disorder. Author, pastor, and Southern Baptist Convention president Frank Page wrote a well-read book about his daughter's severe depression and eventual suicide. A quarter of pastors (yes, *pastors*) admit to having suffered from mental illness themselves—most often depression or anxiety, and many of them since childhood.<sup>1</sup> Even Winston Churchill suffered terribly from a lifelong untreated mood disorder he called a “black dog” that would sit on his lap and haunt him.<sup>2</sup>

Let's talk about this “black dog” and how you can help your teen more effectively cope and find healing.



A quarter of pastors (yes, *pastors*) admit to having suffered from mental illness themselves—most often depression or anxiety, and many of them since childhood.



