

Q What if I want more information?

A For questions about this brochure or the Children's Medication Algorithm Project (CMAP), contact:

CMAP Coordinator _____
Clinic _____
Phone _____

For more information on mental health problems or depression, as well as ways to talk with other teenagers with depression:

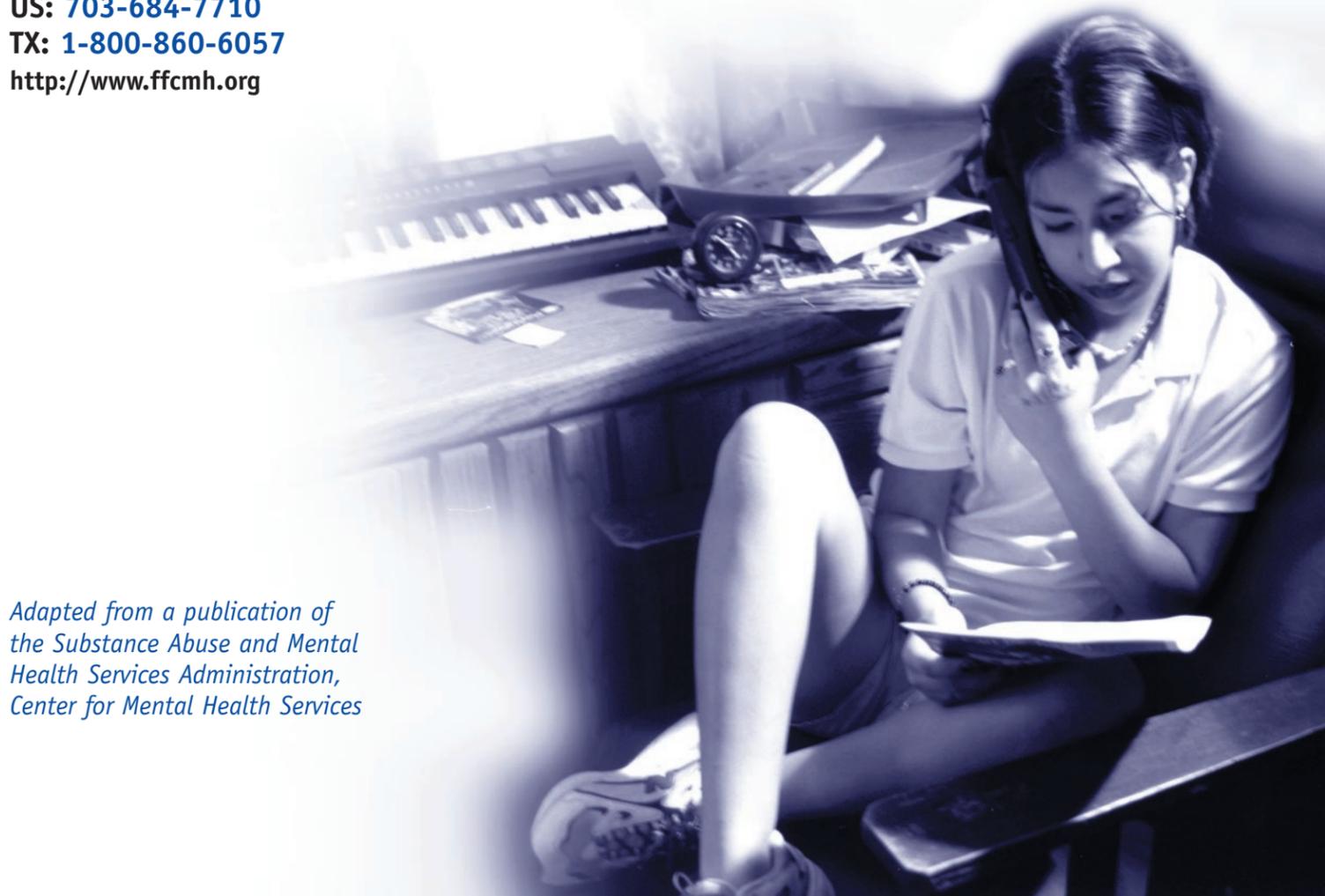
National Depressive and Manic-Depressive Association
US: 1-800-826-3632
TX: 1-888-716-2807
<http://www.ndmda.org>

Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
US: 703-684-7710
TX: 1-800-860-6057
<http://www.ffcmh.org>

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
US: 1-800-950-6264
TX: 1-800-633-3760
<http://www.nami.org>

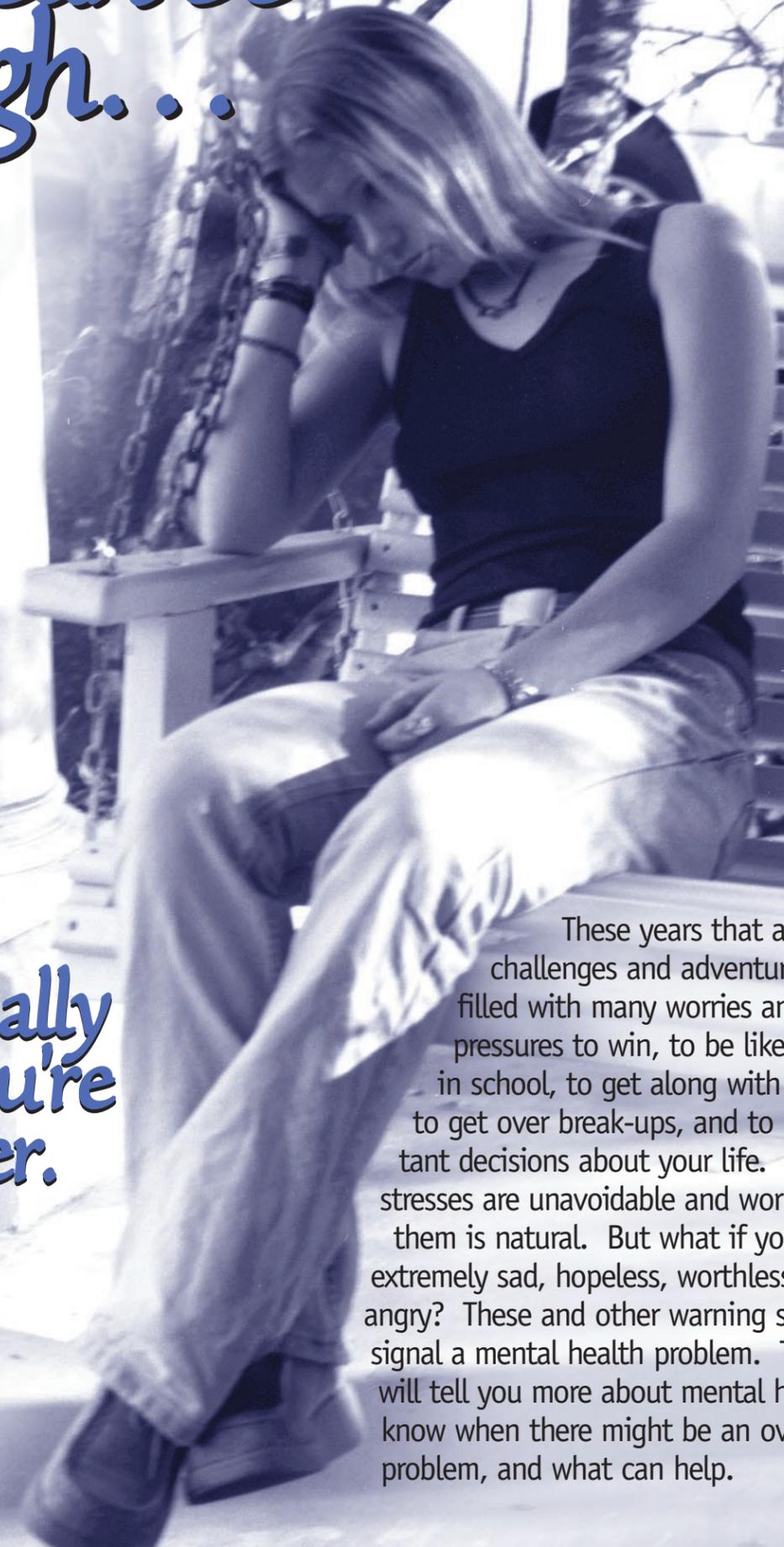
National Institute of Mental Health
US: 1-800-421-4211
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

Adapted from a publication of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services



Life Can Be Tough...

... Especially when you're a teenager.



These years that are filled with challenges and adventures are also filled with many worries and problems: pressures to win, to be liked, to do well in school, to get along with your family, to get over break-ups, and to make important decisions about your life. Most of these stresses are unavoidable and worrying about them is natural. But what if you're feeling extremely sad, hopeless, worthless, or very angry? These and other warning signs could signal a mental health problem. This brochure will tell you more about mental health, how to know when there might be an overwhelming problem, and what can help.

Q What is mental health?

A Mental health is how you think, feel, and act in order to face life's situations. It is how you look at yourself, your life, and the people in your life; how you think about and make choices. Mental health includes things like handling stress, relating to other people, and making decisions. And just as you develop physically, you also develop mentally.

Mental health is a part of everyone. Mental health can be good or not so good and even life-threatening. A person's mental health may be different at different times. Sometimes a person is healthier than at other times and sometimes he or she needs help to handle problems. Many people experience mental health problems at some time during their lives, often during the teenage years.

Q What are mental health problems?

A Mental health problems are real. They affect your thoughts, body, feelings, behavior, and relationships. Doctors call some of them:

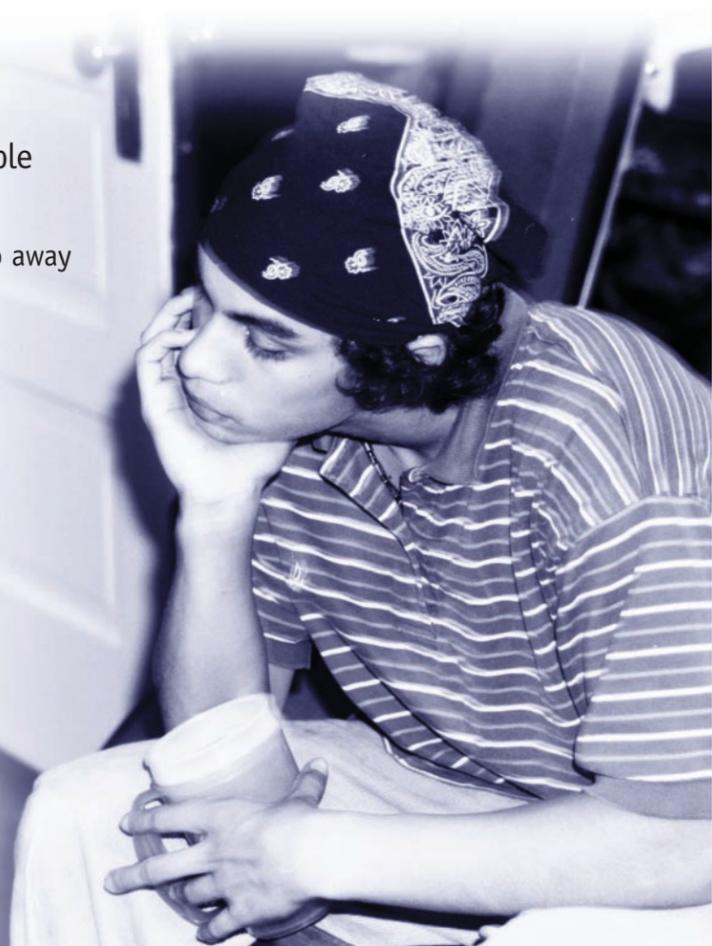
- Depression
- Bipolar or manic-depressive illness
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Anxiety disorders (panic attacks, extreme worries or fears)
- Eating disorders
- Schizophrenia (hearing voices, seeing things that aren't real)
- Conduct disorder

These disorders are not just a passing phase; they can really interfere with a person's life. Mental health problems can be severe and can lead to failure in school, loss of friends, or family problems. For information about these disorders, talk to your doctor or visit the web sites listed on the back of this brochure.

Q So what is depression?

A Depression is one mental health problem that people can experience. Some of the signs of depression are:

- feeling really sad or unhappy and the feelings don't go away
- feeling very angry most of the time
- crying a lot
- overreacting to things, irritability, or agitation
- feeling hopeless about the future
- feeling worthless or guilty a lot
- feeling alone or isolated
- doing much worse in school
- losing interest in things you usually enjoy
- having unexplained changes in sleeping or eating
- avoiding friends or family and wanting to be alone all the time
- feeling as if you can't handle life, wanting to die, or considering suicide
- having difficulty concentrating or thinking straight



Q What causes depression?

A Depression in young people can be caused by biology, heredity, environment, or a mix of these. Scientists believe that depression can occur when certain chemicals in your brain, called neurotransmitters, are out of balance. Just like with other parts of the body, the brain can begin to work differently than it should, which results in changes to your mental health.

Having tragic things happen, such as losing someone important to you, may also 'trigger' depression. The symptoms of depression may be more likely to begin when you are having a lot of pressure or stress in your life. Or maybe it seems like you are feeling bad for no reason at all.

Having depression is not your fault. It doesn't mean you are weak or a failure. It doesn't mean you aren't trying. Whatever the cause, the important thing is to get help.

Q What helps with depression?

A Depression is painful. It can hurt as much as (or more than) a serious physical injury. The sooner you get the right help, the sooner you may feel better.

Some of the things that may help are:

- Counseling
- Medications
- Family therapy
- Group therapy
- Support groups
- Education programs

The people who help you should understand you and your environment. They should talk about your strong points as well as your problems. And they should respect you and your feelings. With help, young people with depression can get better!

