

MISSION

**TO PROMOTE WELLNESS,
EMPOWERMENT, AND LEARN
TO COPE WITH LIFE'S
SITUATIONS BY EDUCATION,
TRAINING, MENTORING AND
LINKING PEOPLE WITH A
VARIETY OF RESOURCES**



DEVELOP A WELLNESS LIFESTYLE

KEEP THE FOLLOWING IN MIND AS YOU DISCOVER YOUR OWN WAYS TO REDUCE SYMPTOMS AND MAINTAIN WELLES:

- REGULARLY TALK TO YOUR COUNSELOR, DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS
- DO EXERCISES THAT HELP YOU TO RELAX, FOCUS, AND REDUS STRESS
- AVOID DRUGS AND ALCOHOL
- ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE EXPOSED TO LIGHT
- IMPROVE YOUR DIET
- ATTEND LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS REGULARLY
- RECORD YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS IN A JOURNAL

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One Person at a Time

TO LIVE WITH DIGNITY AND WITH A
QUALITY OF LIFE

A TOUCH OF KINDNESS



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Depression



Introduction

Depression is a disorder that affects your thoughts, moods, feelings, behavior and even your physical health. People used to think it was “all in your head” and that if you really tried, you could “snap out of it” or just “get over it.” But doctors now know that depression is

not a weakness, and it’s not something you can treat on your own. Depression is a medical disorder with a biological and chemical basis.

Sometimes a stressful life event triggers depression such as a chronic illness. Other times depression seems to occur spontaneously with no identifiable specific cause. Depression is much more than grieving or a bout of the blues.

Depression may occur only once in a person’s life. Often, however, it occurs as repeated episodes over a lifetime, with periods free of depression in between. Or it may be a chronic condition, requiring ongoing treatment over a lifetime.

People of all ages and races suffer from depression. Medications are available that are generally safe and effective, even for the most severe depression. With proper treatment, most people with serious depression improve, often within weeks, and can return to normal daily activities.

Signs and symptoms

Two hallmarks of depression—symptoms key to establishing a diagnosis—are:

- **Loss of interest in normal daily activities.** You lose interest in or pleasure from activities that you use to enjoy
- **Depressed mood.** You feel sad, helpless or

hopeless, and may have crying spells.

In addition, for a doctor or other health professional to diagnose depression, most of the following signs and symptoms also must be present for at least two weeks.

- **Sleep disturbances.** Sleeping too much or having problems sleeping can be a sign you’re depressed. Waking in the middle of the night or early in the morning and not being able to get back to sleep are typical.
- **Impaired thinking or concentration.** You may have trouble concentrating or making decisions and have problems with memory.
- **Changes in weight.** An increased or reduced appetite and unexplained weight gain or loss may indicate depression.
- **Agitation.** You may be seen as restless, agitated, irritable and easily annoyed.
- **Fatigue or slowing of body movements.** You feel weariness and lack of energy nearly every day. You may feel as tired in the morning as you did when you went to bed the night before. You may feel like you’re doing everything is slow motion, or you may speak in a slow, monotonous tone.
- **Low self-esteem.** You feel worthless and have excessive guilt.
- **Less interest in sex.** If you were sexually active before developing depression, you may notice a dramatic decrease in your level of interest in having sexual relations.
- **Thoughts of death.** You have a persistent negative view of yourself, your situation and the future. You may have thoughts of death, dying or suicide.

Self-care

Once treatment for depression begins, you still have to manage on a day-to-day basis. Here are some guidelines:

- **See your doctor regularly.** Your doctor can monitor your progress, provide support and encouragement, and adjust your medication if necessary.
- **Take your medications.** Finding the best medication for you may take several tries. It may take several weeks for you to start seeing results. Once you feel better, continue to take your medication as prescribed.
- **Don’t become isolated.** Try to participate in normal activities.
- **Take care of yourself.** Eat a healthy diet and get the right amount of sleep and exercise. Exercise can help treat some forms of depression, ease stress and help you relax.
- **Avoid alcohol and recreational drugs.** Abuse of alcohol and drugs will slow or prevent your recovery.

Learn as much as you can about your disorder



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