



WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE

## Symptoms and Treatment of Depression

**Depression:** *is an excessive reaction of sadness, emptiness for two weeks or more. Accompanied by low energy and the loss of interest in living. These feelings affect the ability to do everyday activities. When clinically diagnosed using the DSM V (Statistical Diagnostics Manual on Mental Disorders) book, the person must have at least 5 of 9 symptoms for a period of 2 weeks.*

**Major Depression:** *Symptoms will vary from person to person. Two important signs are; Loss of interest in things/activities they liked to do and sadness or irritability and include:*

- Feelings of sadness and emptiness
- lost interest in activities that liked
- Change in the eating pattern
- Change in the sleep pattern
- Slow Movements and Anxiety
- Fatigue and Low Energy
- Feelings of guilt and helplessness
- Problems with concentration and memory
- Ideas of death or suicide

*\*Some elements that make a person (children and adults) more prone to experience an episode of depression are as follows:*

- ◁ Biochemistry
- ◁ Chemicals in the brain are different
- ◁ Genetics: Runs in the family
- ◁ Personality: Low self esteem, pessimistic/negative
- ◁ Environment: Social
- ◁ exposure to crime, violence, abuse, poverty, etc.

### Other types of Depression

**Persistent Depressive Disorder (Dysthymia):** *Often includes less severe symptoms of depression that last much longer, typically for at least 2 years.*

**Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD):** *Comes and goes with the seasons, typically starting in late fall and early winter and going away during spring and summer.*

**Perinatal Depression:** *Occurs when a woman experiences major depression during pregnancy or after delivery (postpartum depression)*

**Depression with symptoms of psychosis:** *A severe form of depression where a person experiences psychosis symptoms, such as delusions (disturbing, false fixed beliefs) or hallucinations (hearing or seeing things that others do not see or hear).*

### What does depression look like in children and teens?

- Depression in children can present with additional symptoms such as irritability and aggression.
- Those who are depressed lose interest in children's activities and homework, appear tired, give up easily and withdraw from friends and family.
- Extreme depression can lead a child to think about suicide or plan for suicide. For youth ages 10-24 years, suicide is among the leading causes of death

## When should we ask for Help?

- Suicide is mentioned. Never handle it yourself.
- The person feels very sad and has other symptoms for more than 2 weeks.
- The person does not want to talk to anyone and/or go to work.

## **Professional Treatment is necessary for all types of Depression:**

- 1) **Psychotherapy:** *can help depressed persons to understand their symptoms and help find positive ways to cope and face the many challenges in life.*
- 2) **Medication:** *antidepressants can help reduce the symptoms of depression. It is important to see a doctor or a psychiatrist and not self-medicate.*

## Protective Factors

- For Children and Adolescents
  - ◁ presence of supportive adults
  - ◁ strong family relationships
  - ◁ strong peer relationships
  - ◁ coping skills, and skills in emotion regulation
- For Adults
  - ◁ Abstinence from alcohol and other drugs
  - ◁ Seeking professional help
  - ◁ Supportive friends and partners
  - ◁ Hope for the future
  - ◁ Goals
  - ◁ Pets or feeling connected to others
  - ◁ Good problem solving skills

## What else can be done?

*These recommendations apply to children and adults*

- Exercise regularly; this has been shown to create positive feelings and improve mood
- Sleep hygiene: establish a routine to have enough quality sleep regularly
- Eat balanced/healthy and avoid drugs and alcohol
- Learn something new and be open minded
- Prayer/meditation
- Maintain a social circle
- Practice meaningful things to you

## Helping a loved one

*If someone you know has depression, help them see a health care provider or mental health professional. You also can:*

- Offer support, understanding, patience, and encouragement.
- Invite them out for walks, outings, and other activities.
- Help them stick to their treatment plan, such as setting reminders to take prescribed medications.
- Make sure they have transportation to therapy appointments.
- Remind them that, with time and treatment, the depression will lift.
- Make space for your own emotions, practice self-compassion, and practice self-care.

## Building resiliency

- Quality time
- Talk about feelings
- Allow space for problem-solving
- Recognize effort, even in failure
- Acknowledge own mistakes



**“SEEK HELP, YOU ARE NOT ALONE.”**

**Emergency & Non-Emergency Helpline. Operates 24 hours a day 7 days a week**

**Call: 1800-854- 7771 TDD/TTY: 562-651-2549**