

What Can I Do?

If you think you or someone you love may be struggling with depression, a consultation with a medical professional is advised. A physician or psychiatrist can rule out medical conditions that may be causing or complicating mood problems and may suggest medications. A mental health professional such as a psychologist, counselor or social worker can help identify the sources of the depression and suggest ways to overcome them.

If you or someone you know has thoughts of self-harm or suicide, contact your health professional or call 1-800-273-TALK for help.



Resources

The National Institute of Mental Health
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>

Mental Health America
<http://www.nmha.org/>

The International Foundation for Research & Education on Depression
<http://www.ifred.org/>

The National Alliance on Mental Illness
<http://www.nami.org/>



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Is it Depression?



More than the blues....

Is it Depression?

Depression is one of the most common and most treatable mental illnesses in the US. Up to a quarter of us will experience Major Depressive Disorder in our lifetime. Depression can affect anyone at any time – people



As many as 25% of Americans will experience depression in their life-

Depression is different from healthy feelings of sadness or grief, which are expectable reactions to negative life events, tend to be shorter in duration, and have less of an impact on everyday living.

Depression can result from heredity, problematic ways of thinking and behaving, difficult life events, and can accompany a number of other medical health conditions.

of any age, gender, race, and economic status can experience depression.

Depression involves mood changes that may include sadness or emptiness, loneliness, worthlessness, loss of interest in things, hopelessness, self-doubts, irritability and guilt. Depression can also involve physical and behavioral changes such as low motivation and energy, restlessness or being slowed down, difficulty concentrating, aches and pains, social withdrawal, appetite and sleep changes, and even thoughts of suicide. These symptoms can be very distressing and can cause serious problems at work or school, in relationships, and even in ones ability to care for oneself. Depression can also make management of health conditions such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease more difficult.

Our brain is an organ, and just like our heart or our liver, it can be vulnerable to disease. Unfortunately, there is a stigma



Symptoms of depression can include loneliness and social withdrawal.

based on the misconception that people who are depressed are weak, lazy or crazy. Such misconceptions can prevent people from getting the help they need to recover.

In general, the most effective treatment for depression includes a combination of talk therapy, medication, and social support.

If you or someone you love has experienced five or more of the following symptoms most of the day, every day for two weeks or longer, talk to a medical professional:

- **Sadness, emptiness, irritability, or crying**
- **Lack of interest in things that used to be pleasurable**
- **Significant changes in body weight or appetite**
- **Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much**
- **Restless or slowed thoughts and movements**
- **Tiredness or loss of energy**
- **Worthlessness or guilt**
- **Trouble concentrating or making decisions**
- **Thoughts of death or suicide**