

MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

DEPRESSION

Everybody feels sad at some point. Whether it is due to a failed test, a fight with a friend or a loss of a pet, sadness comes to us all at some point. Feeling sad is part of the human condition and is unfortunately unavoidable. Sadness can in fact be a healthy, normal response to your

“DEPRESSION LIES. IT TELLS YOU YOU’VE ALWAYS FELT THIS WAY, AND YOU ALWAYS WILL. BUT YOU HAVEN’T AND YOU WON’T.” -HALLEY CORNELL

circumstances. And during certain periods of life, especially the transition from childhood to adulthood, moods shift quickly due to hormonal changes. The question then becomes how do you know when you moved on from temporary sadness or poor mood to depression? It is important to pay attention to how long you have been feeling depressed and how it is affecting your day to day functioning. Depression symptoms such as hopelessness, low energy, poor sleep or sleeping too

much, changes in appetite, lack of interest or pleasure in activities, overreaction or criticism, poor self-esteem, anger or rage, and suicidal thoughts or actions are all indicators of depression. These symptoms must be present for at least two weeks and must be effecting your ability to function day to day. It can be scary and overwhelming to feel this way. Some even turn to substance use, like drugs and alcohol to try and cope with their depression. That is why it is so important, if you think your feelings of sadness are not going away and you are feeling overwhelmed, to reach out and ask for help.

I think I have depression. Now What???

Now, you must take action to deal with your depression. Depression can feel very overwhelming. Your feelings will lie to you, make you think that you are always going to feel sad or depressed. But don’t listen and don’t lose hope. Remember that depression is very treatable. You can get better. Getting better starts by finding an adult in your life whom you can trust, telling them how you feel, and asking them to assist you in finding treatment for your depression.

SYMPTOMS OF DERPESSION

These last more than two weeks; interfere with daily life:

- * Sadness or Hopelessness
- * Low Energy
- * Poor Sleep or Sleeping Too Much
- * Changes in Appetite
- * Lack of Focus or Concentration
- * Anger or Rage
- * Restlessness or Irritability
- * Withdrawal from Activities/Socialization
- * Overreaction to Criticism
- * Poor Self Esteem
- * Suicidal Thoughts or Actions

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Treatment options for depression vary. In most cases some type of **counseling** or **therapy** is recommended. This means meeting with a professional counselor or psychologist who will work with you to address your depression. There are several different types of therapy. Psychotherapy focuses on helping you understand and cope with past events in your life that are contributing to your depression. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy will focus on changing negative thought and behavioral patterns. Interpersonal therapy addresses relationships and works with you to develop healthy relationships. **Medication** may also be prescribed along with therapy to provide relief for symptoms. Another important aspect of seeking treatment is to remember to **Be Kind to Yourself**.

Depression is caused a many different factors. Family history, physical, biological, and social factors. Struggling with depression does not mean you are a bad or weak person. It's not something that you can wish away or simply snap out of. It doesn't mean that you won't be successful in your present or your future. As you are working through treatment, focus on your progress and keeping moving forward. Reaching out for help may feel awkward or embarrassing for a moment, but avoiding those feelings isn't worth suffering in silence. If you are having thoughts of doing something to hurt yourself, you must get help immediately. Tell an adult you trust right away. Call 911 or call **1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)** or www.hopeline.com.

“PROMISE ME YOU’LL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU’RE BRAVER THAN YOU BELIEVE, AND STRONGER THAN YOU SEEM, AND SMARTER THAN YOU THINK” -WINNIE THE POOH