



Depression

Depression affects one in four people in the United States and has many different causes. Depression is not caused by personal weakness, laziness, or lack of willpower.

Causes of Depression

Common causes of depression are:

- A chemical imbalance in the brain.
- Inherited - depression can run in families.
- Events in your life, such as a job loss.
- Side effects from certain medications, drugs, alcohol, or illness.

Symptoms of Depression

If you have several of these symptoms for a significant period of time and they make your daily routine very difficult, you may have depression:

- No interest or pleasure in things you used to enjoy.
- Feeling sad or empty.
- Crying easily or crying for no reason.
- Feeling tired and slowed down or feeling unable to sit still.
- Feeling worthless or guilty.
- Weight gain or loss.
- Thoughts about death or suicide.
- Trouble thinking, remembering things, or focusing.
- Problems sleeping, or wanting to sleep all of the time.

Treating Depression

Depression may be managed with counseling, medication, and lifestyle changes.

Medication, called antidepressants, may be prescribed in some cases to help with some of the symptoms of depression.

When you start feeling depressed, find one action (listed on the other side) to focus on.

Things I Can Do To Feel Good

Stick to your treatment plan

- Take your medication every day.
- Participate in counseling. 
- Keep appointments. 
- Ask your doctor questions.

Get proper nutrition, exercise and sleep

- Go for a bike ride or walk.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables. 
- Avoid alcohol.
- Drink plenty of water. 
- Sleep 8 hours each night.

Maintain supportive relationships

- Talk with a friend every day.
- Attend scheduled events.
- Join a support group.
- Leave the house at least once daily.
- Volunteer. 
- Meditate or worship. 

Make time for spiritual and pleasurable activities

- Do your hobbies.
- Keep a journal. 
- Listen to music.

Resources

The NAMI-GC, or National Alliance on Mental Illness of Greater Chicago
Dedicated to improving the quality of life for those affected with mental illness.

Call (312) 563-0445 Monday - Friday, 10 am to 5 pm for immediate help.
Call (312) 563-0445 for general information about support groups and events.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger due to suicidal thoughts,
plans or intent, **please call 911.**

If there is no immediate danger, call one of these hotlines, available 24 hours a day:
1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433) 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)