
FACT SHEET

Depression

- Depression is one of the most common forms of mental illness.
- Despite all the research conducted into this illness, the exact causes of depression remain unknown.
- What is known, however, is that there are precipitating factors, painful events that may foster an episode of depression, such as the loss of a loved one, a divorce, a job loss, an accident or a serious illness.
- It is also recognized today that depression has biological causes.
- Thanks to modern technology, the workings of the brain are becoming continuously better understood and researchers have identified certain substances, including serotonin, a neurotransmitter that plays an important role in the development of mental illnesses such as depression.
- True depression, not to be confused with a passing case of the “blues,” is a profound state of distress that lasts several weeks, even months.
- The symptoms of depression are loss of interest in activities usually enjoyed, sadness, a frequent feeling of wanting to cry, irritability, guilt feelings, loss of self-esteem, fatigue, sudden loss or gain of appetite or weight, inability to sleep or oversleeping, dark or suicidal thoughts, unexplained aches and pains and a tendency to isolate oneself. **THE REAL SIGN THAT A PERSON MAY BE DEPRESSED IS THE COMBINATION OF SEVERAL SYMPTOMS THAT LAST FOR A TIME, WITH NO SIGN OF IMPROVEMENT!**
- Depression is a serious illness that should never be taken lightly. It is therefore important to consult a doctor as soon as symptoms are noticed, because depression can worsen and even lead to suicide.
- Depression is an illness that can be successfully treated with anti-depressive drugs, and/or with psychotherapy.

FACT SHEET

Depression (cont'd)

<p style="text-align: center;">HOW TO HELP SOMEONE CLOSE WHO APPEARS TO BE SUFFERING FROM DEPRESSION</p>

1. Learn how to read them

- Watch for behavioral changes.

2. End their isolation

- Approach and talk to them with respect.

3. Refer them

- Encourage them to see a health professional. Don't hesitate to seek outside advice (officials, trusted adults, friends, etc.).

4. Most of all, don't play doctor or therapist

- Understand your limits. Offer support, a friendly ear and encouragement but, most important, remain the friend you have always been.