



eap *perspectives*

Solutions Employee Assistance Program

GOT THE "BLUES"?

The symptoms of depression & how to help a loved one.

You're not alone. We all get down from time to time. But if the condition persists for more than a few weeks, and you can't seem to shake it, it could be Clinical Depression.

9.5% According to the National Institute of Mental Health 9.5% (18.8 million) of American adults suffer from Clinical Depression. It is more widespread than Coronary Heart Disease or Cancer.

18% suffering from depression or generalized anxiety have ever received an official diagnosis or treatment.

80% Depression is treatable more than 80% of the time and many patients respond within a relatively short period of time. Many do not seek treatment due to fear, ignorance, misinformation, and stigma.

\$3000 The major costs of depression are incurred by employers due to absenteeism and decreased productivity. On average, each employee with depression will cost his/her employer \$3000 per year due to lost days on the job and reduced productivity.

Helping the Depressed Person

The most important thing anyone can do for the depressed person is to help him or her get appropriate diagnosis and treatment. This may involve encouraging the individual to stay with treatment until symptoms begin to abate (several weeks), or to seek different treatment if no improvement occurs. On occasion, it may require making an appointment and accompanying the depressed person to the doctor. It may mean monitoring whether the depressed person is taking medication.

The second most important thing is to offer emotional support. This involves understanding, patience, affection, and encouragement. Engage the depressed person in conversation and listen carefully. Do not disparage feelings expressed, but point out realities and offer hope. Do not ignore remarks about suicide. Always report them to the depressed person's therapist.

Invite the depressed person for walks, outings, to the movies, and other activities. Be gently insistent if your invitation is refused. Encourage participation in some activities that once gave pleasure, such as hobbies, sports, religious or cultural activities, but do not push the depressed person

to undertake too much too soon. The depressed person needs diversion and company, but too many demands can increase feelings of failure.

Do not accuse the depressed person of faking illness or of laziness, or expect him or her "to snap out of it." Eventually, with treatment, most depressed people do get better. Keep that in mind, and keep reassuring the depressed person that, with time and help, he or she will feel better.

WHAT TO DO

Seek help for yourself or a loved one. It is important to be evaluated by a qualified professional.

National Depression Screening Day is October 5, 2006.

Call 800-520-6373 or go to www.mentalhealthscreening.org to find a free, anonymous screening near you. You will also find facts about mood and anxiety conditions and common questions about screenings. Screenings are available year round as well.

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or 211 in Connecticut

Solutions EAP can be a good place to start. Our counselors are very qualified to evaluate you and refer you to appropriate treatment resources. Call our number below 24 hours a day.

Call the EAP for **free & confidential** counseling and referral. Family members are welcome.

Solutions
FOR PEOPLE IN THE WORKPLACE

1-800-526-3485

www.solutions-eap.com

Solutions EAP is a program of Middlesex Hospital and Behavioral Health Connecticut.



SOLUTIONS

What to do if you suspect a loved one is suicidal

Not all depressed people are suicidal, but most people who attempt suicide are depressed. So take a look at the list of symptoms below and review the front page on how to help a loved one who is depressed.

But if you think someone is suicidal you need to take action. According to Stop A Suicide Today (www.stopasuicide.org), 70% of people who commit suicide tell someone or give warning signs.

Warning Signs

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling rage or uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities—seemingly without thinking
- Feeling trapped—like there’s no way out
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and society

- Feeling anxious or agitated, being unable to sleep, or sleeping all the time
- Experiencing dramatic mood changes
- Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life



TTY: 800-799-4TTY (4889)
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

ACT

Stop A Suicide Today (www.stopasuicide.org), uses the acronym ACT.

Acknowledge: Take it seriously, and be willing to listen.

Care: Take the initiative, and voice your concern.

Treatment: Get professional help immediately.

How can you help someone?

If you know someone whom you think may be suicidal, show that you care by:

- Listening to them with sincere

concern for their feelings. Do not offer advice, but let them know that they are not alone.

- Sharing your feelings with them. If you feel that they may make a reckless decision, tell them that you are concerned. They need to know that they are important to you and that you care.
- Inquiring if they have had suicidal thoughts or if they have made a suicide plan in a straightforward and caring manner. If you feel you cannot ask the question, find someone who can.
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Source: www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov

In An Emergency

- ➔ Take your friend or loved one to an emergency room or psychiatric hospital.
- ➔ Do not leave them alone until help is available.
- ➔ Remove from the vicinity any firearms, drugs or sharp objects that could be used in a suicide attempt.
- ➔ Hospitalization may be indicated and may be necessary at least until the crisis abates.
- ➔ Call 911

Source: www.afsp.org

Major depression is a treatable psychiatric illness. It is not what we mean when talking about the blues. Depression often runs in families. If you experience depression, it can be life threatening because in its severe form, it can produce suicidal thoughts. Spotting symptoms of depression and seeking a professional evaluation is your first step. If alcohol or drug use is associated with any of the following symptoms, an evaluation for addictive disease is also important.

SYMPTOMS of DEPRESSION:

- feelings of hopelessness and despair, low self-esteem;
- feelings of sadness, crying jags;
- sleep disturbances (too much sleep, or the inability to sleep);

- noticeable increases or decreases in appetite with significant changes in weight, either up or down;
- loss of concentration, memory difficulties;
- low energy;
- inability to feel pleasure, reduced interest in fun activities;
- loss of sexual interest or interest in being with others;
- feeling physically worn down and sick;
- thoughts of “wanting to be out of your misery”;
- suicidal thoughts or planning suicide (Note: This is a medical emergency. Get help immediately.)