

What is depression?

- We all have moments or days when we feel sad, down, or unmotivated, especially when dealing with stressful situations. Depression or a “major depressive episode,” may be diagnosed by a provider in someone who reports a depressed mood for most of the day, nearly every day and/or loss of interest in things they would normally enjoy, along with several other symptoms for at least two weeks.
- Symptoms of depression include:
 - Depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day (i.e., feelings of sadness, hopelessness)
 - Loss of interest and pleasure in almost all activities most of the day, nearly every day
 - Weight loss or weight gain
 - Sleep problems (can be insomnia/difficulty sleeping or hypersomnia/oversleeping)
 - Psychomotor agitation or retardation (significant speeding up or slowing down of physical movement)
 - Decreased concentration
 - Fatigue
 - Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
 - Thoughts of death or suicide

What might treatment for depression include at Shepherd Center?

- Normalizing of negative feelings in the face of stressful situations and education about depression
- Counseling, or individual or group therapy
- Learning cognitive behavioral skills for managing depressed mood (e.g., tools for monitoring mood, challenging negative self-talk, and increasing activity)
- Referral to a doctor for medication to treat depression
- Community re-integration/ support for gradually and safely increasing meaningful and enjoyable activity

What are some suggestions for people who are experiencing depression?

- Talk to a health professional about your symptoms
- Learn about depression and how to treat it
- Spend time with friends, family, and supportive people
- Try to be kind to yourself and avoid judging your feelings or experiences
- Practice good self-care (eat well, exercise, sleep, and engage in activities that make you feel good or that matter to you)
- Try to maintain a daily routine
- Take your medications as prescribed and talk to a doctor about medication for depression if you feel it might be helpful for you

**If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. The number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-8255 (press 1 to reach the Veteran's Crisis line).*



How might depression affect family members and other people in a person's support system?

- Family members and other people in a person's support system may experience a range of negative emotions themselves, as depression can affect communication, interest in family activities, sexual activity, or other shared experiences
- Family members and other people in a person's support system may feel emotionally distant, worried, frustrated, hurt, or discouraged when trying to help

How can I support someone who is experiencing depression?

- Do your best to be patient and listen without judgement
- Try not to take their behavior personally
- Ask the person what she/he needs at a particular time (e.g., a hug, some space, to do something together, etc.)
- Encourage them to talk to a health professional about his/her symptoms

How can I take care of myself while supporting someone with depression?

- Learn about depression and treatment, but acknowledge that it is not your job to control or treat someone else's depression
- Join a support group. You can learn more about support groups at <https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/Support-Groups>
- Try to be kind to yourself and avoid judging your feelings or experiences
- Practice good self-care (eat well, exercise, sleep, and engage in activities that make you feel good or that matter to you)
- Try to maintain a routine for yourself and other household members
- Meet with a counselor or therapist if you feel like you need more support

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Additional Comments: