



My Drift

Title: Depression

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Google AI Overview

Depression, or major depressive disorder, is a serious mood disorder causing persistent sadness and loss of interest, affecting thoughts, feelings, and daily activities, with symptoms like fatigue, sleep/appetite changes, irritability, and hopelessness. It stems from a mix of genetics, brain chemistry, life events, and medical issues, and is treatable with therapy, medication, lifestyle changes (exercise, diet, sleep), and social support, though professional help is crucial for diagnosis and management.

Common Symptoms

- ❖ Persistent sadness, emptiness, or irritability
- ❖ Loss of interest or pleasure in activities
- ❖ Fatigue or loss of energy
- ❖ Sleep problems (too much or too little)
- ❖ Changes in appetite or weight
- ❖ Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- ❖ Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or hopelessness
- ❖ Thoughts of death or suicide

Causes and Risk Factors

Biological: Genetics, brain chemistry (neurotransmitters).

Environmental: Stressful life events (loss, trauma, divorce), social isolation.

Medical: Chronic illnesses, certain medications, substance use, sleep issues.

Treatment and Management

Professional Help: See a doctor or mental health professional for diagnosis and treatment.

Psychotherapy (Talk Therapy): Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and other therapies help change thinking patterns.

Medications: Antidepressants can help manage moderate to severe depression.

Lifestyle: Regular exercise, healthy diet, good sleep and avoiding alcohol.

Support: Stay connected with loved ones; don't withdraw.

When to Seek Help

If symptoms last most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks, or if you have thoughts of self-harm, contact a healthcare provider or emergency services immediately.

Some Depression Statistics

The percentage of U.S. adults who report currently having or being treated for depression has exceeded 18% in both 2024 and 2025, up about eight percentage points since the initial measurement in 2015. The current rate of 18.3% measured in 2025 projects to an estimated 47.8 million Americans suffering from depression. Most of the increase has occurred since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

The percentage of adults who report having been diagnosed with depression in their lifetime stands at 28.5%.

Depression Rate Climbs Sharply for Adults in Lower-Income Households

(See Chart on Next Page)

Year	2017 %	2025 %	Change Between 2017 and 2025 (pct. pts.)
All U.S. Adults	13.5	18.3	4.8
Gender			
Male	9.3	12.7	3.4
Female	17.6	23.4	5.8
Age			
18-29	13.0	26.7	13.7
30-44	14.2	21.5	7.3
45-64	14.0	18.4	4.4
65 and older	12.1	11.5	-0.6
Race/Ethnicity			
White Adults	14.7	18.9	4.2
Black Adults	12.3	18.0	5.7
Hispanic Adults	13.0	17.7	4.7
Annual Household Income			
<\$24,000	22.1	35.1	13.0
\$24,000-\$47,999	14.2	23.3	9.1
\$48,000-\$89,999	12.1	18.4	6.3
\$90000-\$120,000	7.5	16.5	9.0
\$120,000+	8.6	12.8	4.2

SOURCE: GALLUP

Current depression rates have risen dramatically since 2017 among adults under the age of 30, doubling from 13.0% in 2017 to 26.7% in 2025. The current estimate is up from 24.6% measured in 2023, indicating that depression continues to be a worsening problem among young adults.

Among those in households earning under \$24,000 per year, reports of depression have risen from 22.1% in 2017 to 26.1% in 2023 to 35.1% now, a 13-point increase in eight years. The change for these lower-earning Americans is particularly notable given the nine-point increase since 2023.

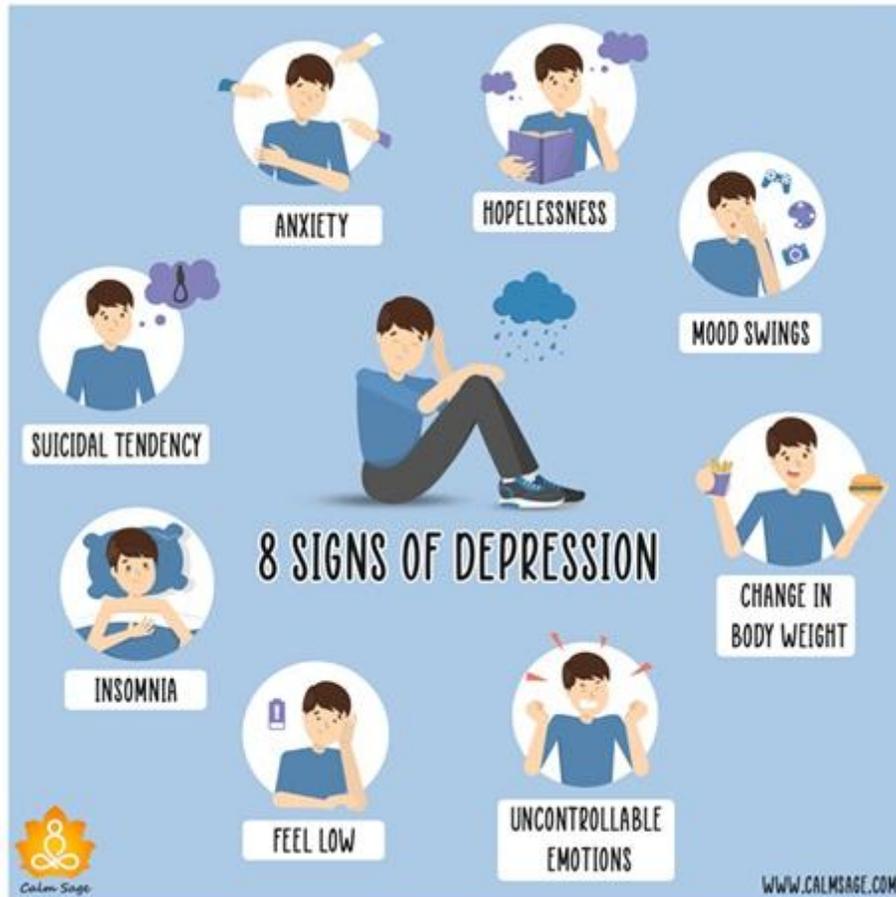
What is depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest in things and activities you once enjoyed. It can also cause difficulty with thinking, memory, eating and sleeping.

Depression

The symptoms of depression can vary slightly depending on the type and can range from mild to severe. In general, symptoms include:

 Low energy.	 Feeling very sad or hopeless.	 Thoughts of self-harm or suicide.
 Irritability.	 Changes in eating behavior.	 Sleep changes.
 Loss of interest in hobbies and activities.		 Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.



It's normal to feel sad about or grieve over difficult life situations, such as losing your job or a divorce. But depression is different in that it persists practically every day for at least two weeks and involves other symptoms than sadness alone.

There are several types of depressive disorders. Clinical depression, or major depressive disorder, is often just called “depression.” It's the most severe type of depression.

Without treatment, depression can get worse and last longer. In severe cases, it can lead to self-harm or death by suicide. The good news is that treatments can be very effective in improving symptoms.

What are the types of depression?

The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) classifies depressive disorders as the following:

Clinical depression (major depressive disorder): A diagnosis of major depressive disorder means you've felt sad, low or worthless most days for at least two weeks while also having other symptoms such as sleep problems, loss of interest in activities or change in appetite. This is the most severe form of depression and one of the most common forms.

Persistent depressive disorder (PDD): Persistent depressive disorder is mild or moderate depression that lasts for at least two years. The symptoms are less severe than major depressive disorder. Healthcare providers used to call PDD dysthymia.

Disruptive mood dysregulation disorder (DMDD): DMDD causes chronic, intense irritability and frequent anger outbursts in children. Symptoms usually begin by the age of 10.

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD): With PMDD, you have premenstrual syndrome (PMS) symptoms along with mood symptoms, such as extreme irritability, anxiety or depression. These symptoms improve within a few days after your period starts, but they can be severe enough to interfere with your life.

Depressive disorder due to another medical condition: Many medical conditions can create changes in your body that cause depression. Examples include hypothyroidism, heart disease, Parkinson's disease and cancer. If you're able to treat the underlying condition, the depression usually improves as well.

There are also specific forms of major depressive disorder, including:

Seasonal affective disorder (seasonal depression): This is a form of major depressive disorder that typically arises during the fall and winter and goes away during the spring and summer.

Prenatal depression and postpartum depression: Prenatal depression is depression that happens during pregnancy. Postpartum depression is depression that develops within four weeks of delivering a baby. The DSM refers to these as "major depressive disorder (MDD) with peripartum onset."

Atypical depression: Symptoms of this condition, also known as major depressive disorder with atypical features, vary slightly from "typical" depression. The main difference is a temporary mood improvement in response to positive events (mood reactivity). Other key symptoms include increased appetite and rejection sensitivity.

People with bipolar mental disorder also experience episodes of depression in addition to manic or hypomanic episodes.

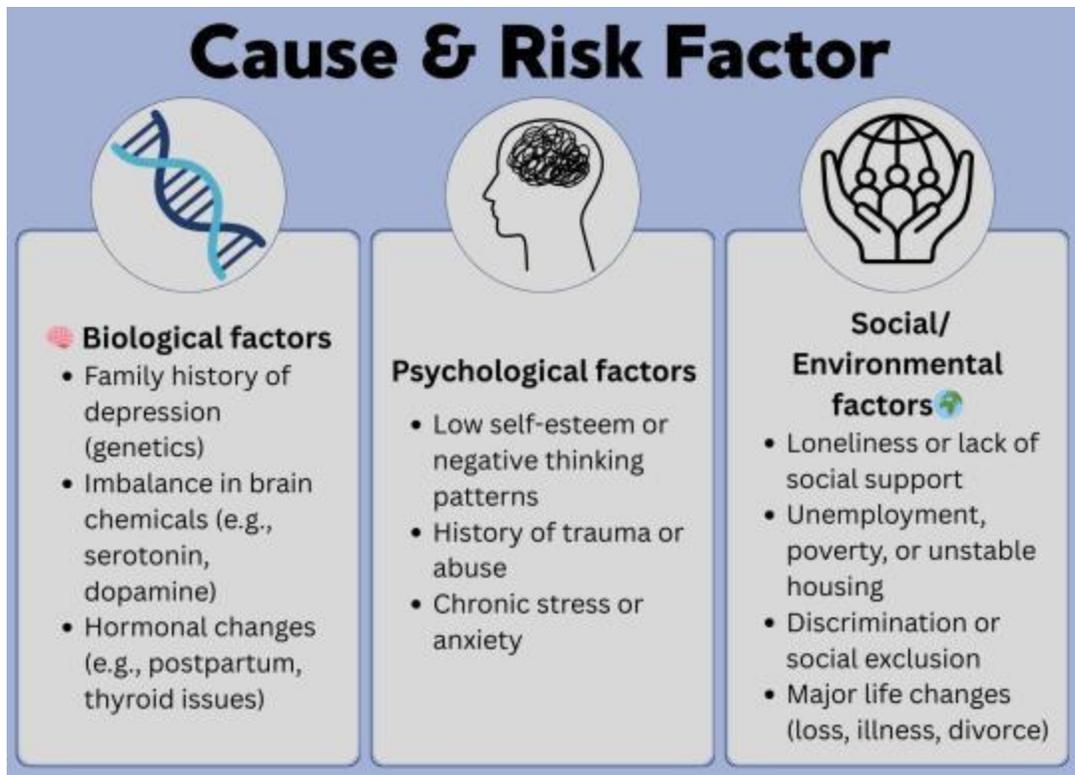


Who does depression affect?

Depression can affect anyone — including children and adults.

Having certain risk factors makes it more likely that you may develop depression. For example, the following conditions are associated with higher rates of depression:

- ❖ Neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease
- ❖ Stroke
- ❖ Multiple sclerosis
- ❖ Seizure disorders
- ❖ Cancer
- ❖ Macular degeneration
- ❖ Chronic pain



What are the symptoms of depression?

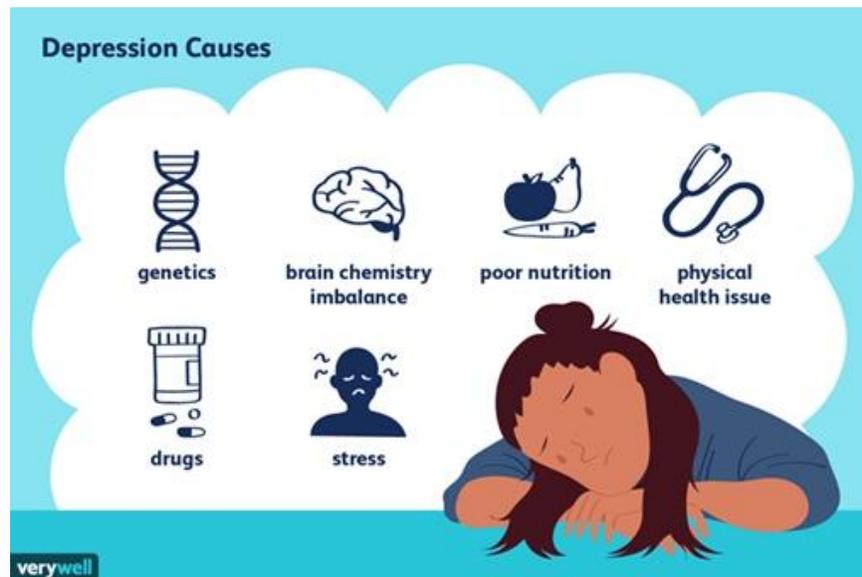
The symptoms of depression can vary slightly depending on the type and can range from mild to severe. In general, symptoms include:

- ❖ Feeling very sad, hopeless or worried. Children and adolescents with depression may be irritable rather than sad.
- ❖ Not enjoying things that used to bring joy.
- ❖ Being easily irritated or frustrated.
- ❖ Eating too much or too little, which may result in weight gain or weight loss.
- ❖ Trouble sleeping (insomnia) or sleeping too much (hypersomnia).
- ❖ Having low energy or fatigue.
- ❖ Having a difficult time concentrating, making decisions or remembering things.
- ❖ Experiencing physical issues like headache, stomachache or sexual dysfunction.
- ❖ Having thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

What causes depression?

Researchers don't know the exact cause of depression. They think that several factors contribute to its development, including:

- ❖ **Brain chemistry:** An imbalance of neurotransmitters, including serotonin and dopamine, contributes to the development of depression.
- ❖ **Genetics:** If you have a first-degree relative (biological parent or sibling) with depression, you're about three times as likely to develop the condition as the general population. However, you can have depression without a family history of it.
- ❖ **Stressful life events:** Difficult experiences, such as the death of a loved one, trauma, divorce, isolation and lack of support, can trigger depression.
- ❖ **Medical conditions:** Chronic pain and chronic conditions like diabetes can lead to depression.
- ❖ **Medication:** Some medications can cause depression as a side effect. Substance use, including alcohol, can also cause depression or make it worse.



How is depression diagnosed?

Healthcare providers diagnose depression based on a thorough understanding of your symptoms, medical history and mental health history. They may diagnose you with a specific type of depression, such as seasonal affective disorder or postpartum depression, based on the context of your symptoms.

To receive a diagnosis of depression, you must have five depression symptoms every day, nearly all day, for at least two weeks. Your provider may order medical tests, such as blood tests, to see if any underlying medical conditions are causing your depressive symptoms.

How Do Doctors Diagnose Depression?

Information on your self-reported symptoms, psychosocial background, and family medical history is collected to make a depression diagnosis. Be prepared to discuss the frequency, intensity, and duration of your depression symptoms. Your doctor or mental health provider may also make observations of their own based on your behavior, presentation, and exhibited mood level. This approach will allow them to make the most accurate diagnosis.

How is depression treated?

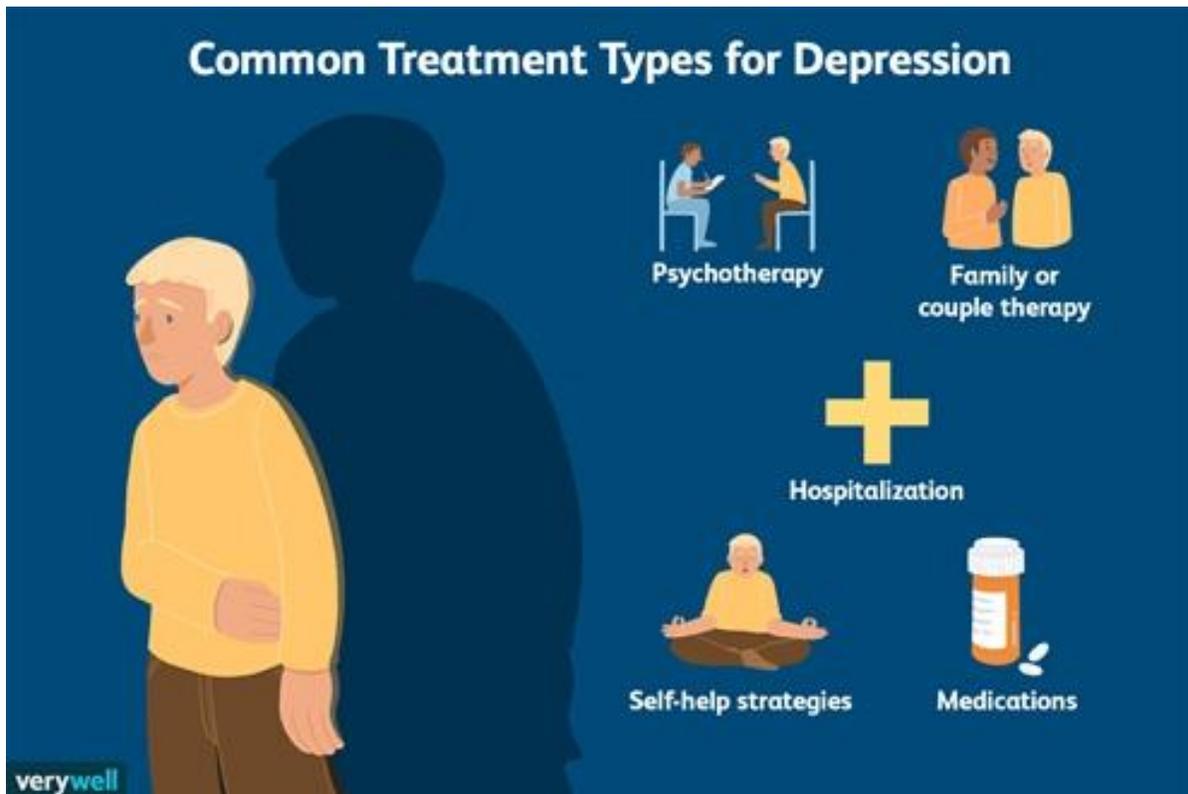
Depression is one of the most treatable mental health conditions. Approximately 80% to 90% of people with depression who seek treatment eventually respond well to treatment. Treatment options include:

Psychotherapy: Psychotherapy (talk therapy) involves talking with a mental health professional. Your therapist helps you identify and change unhealthy emotions, thoughts and behaviors. There are many types of psychotherapy — cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is the most common. Sometimes, brief therapy is all you need. Other people continue therapy for several months or years.

Medication: Prescription medicine called antidepressants can help change the brain chemistry that causes depression. There are several different types of antidepressants, and it may take time to figure out the one that's best for you. Some antidepressants have side effects, which often improve with time. If they don't, talk to your healthcare provider. A different medication may work better for you.

Complementary medicine: This involves treatments you may receive along with traditional Western medicine. People with mild depression or ongoing symptoms can improve their well-being with therapies such as acupuncture, massage, hypnosis and biofeedback.

Brain stimulation therapy: Brain stimulation therapy can help people who have severe depression or depression with psychosis. Types of brain stimulation therapy include electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) and vagus nerve stimulation (VNS).



There are also things you can do at home to help improve depression symptoms, including:

- ❖ Getting regular exercise
- ❖ Getting quality sleep (not too little or too much)
- ❖ Eating a healthy diet
- ❖ Avoiding alcohol, which is a depressant
- ❖ Spending time with people you care about

What is the prognosis of depression?

The prognosis (outlook) of depression varies depending on certain factors, including:

- ❖ Its severity and type
- ❖ If it's temporary or long-lasting.
- ❖ If it's treated or untreated
- ❖ If you have co-occurring conditions, such as other mood disorders, medical conditions or substance use disorder

PROGNOSIS

Major depression is a recurrent illness but full inter-episode remission is the norm.

~ 60% of patients who have one episode of major depression will have a 2nd episode.

~ 90% of patients who have 3 episodes of major depression will have a 4th episode.

~ 2/3 of patients have full recovery between episodes.

~ 1/3 of patients have partial recovery between episodes *and are at high risk for recurrence.*

With proper diagnosis and treatment, the vast majority of people with depression live healthy, fulfilling lives. Depression can return after you get treatment, though, so it's important to seek medical help as soon as symptoms begin again.

Without treatment, depression can:

- ❖ Become worse
- ❖ Increase your chance of other health conditions, like dementia
- ❖ Lead to the worsening of existing health conditions, like diabetes or chronic pain
- ❖ Lead to self-harm or death

Depression accounts for nearly 40,000 cases of suicide each year in the United States. It's essential to get medical help as soon as possible if you're having suicidal thoughts. Call 911 or 988 (the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline) or go to the emergency room.

Can I prevent depression?

You can't always prevent depression, but you can help reduce your risk by:

- ❖ **Maintaining a healthy sleep routine**
- ❖ **Managing stress with healthy coping mechanisms**
- ❖ **Practicing regular self-care activities such as exercise and meditation**

If you've had depression before, you may be more likely to experience it again. If you have depression symptoms, get help as soon as possible.

When should I see my healthcare provider about depression?

If you have symptoms of depression, see a healthcare provider or mental health professional. They can give you an accurate diagnosis and suggest treatment options.

If you've started treatment for depression and it isn't working or you're having unpleasant side effects, talk to your provider. They can recommend a different treatment plan.

Some Interesting Facts

U.S. States with Highest and Lowest Depression Rates

Highest Rates (Often in Appalachia/Southeast)

West Virginia: Frequently cited as the highest, with rates exceeding 27%.

Kentucky: Also very high, often second or third.

Tennessee: Consistently listed in the top tier.

Arkansas: Another state with high prevalence.

Alabama, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Vermont, Washington: Also, among the states with elevated rates.

Lowest Rates (Often Hawaii/West Coast/Northeast)

Hawaii: Consistently the lowest, sometimes below 13%.

California: Typically has one of the lowest rates.

New Jersey: Also frequently appears in the lowest-rate states.

Florida, Illinois: Also noted for lower prevalence.

U.S. States with Highest and Lowest Happiness Index

Hawaii consistently ranks as the happiest U.S. state due to high life satisfaction, good health, and low depression. Other top contenders for happiness include Maryland, Nebraska, and New Jersey. West Virginia frequently appears as the least happy, often leading in depression rates and lacking in emotional/physical well-being, with other Southern states like Louisiana and Arkansas also scoring low.

World Countries with Highest and Lowest Happiness Index

Finland consistently ranks as the happiest country globally in the World Happiness Report, followed by other Nordic nations like Denmark, Iceland, and Sweden, while war-torn Afghanistan is typically the least happy, with countries like Sierra Leone, Lebanon, and Malawi also at the bottom due to humanitarian crises and instability.

World Countries with Highest and Lowest Depression Rates

The countries with the lowest depression rates often include low-income nations in Asia and the Pacific like Myanmar, Indonesia, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, with rates sometimes under 2% of the population, but this data is complicated by stigma and limited access to care, while some studies point to places like the Czech Republic and Slovakia for lower European rates.

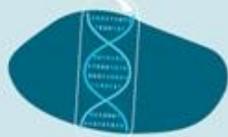
Countries with the highest depression rates vary by study, but often include Portugal, Greece, Spain, Iran, and the United States, along with high rates in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia; however, some data points to Lesotho, Morocco, and Greenland for new cases, while France was noted as most depressed in Europe pre-pandemic, highlighting differences between prevalence (lifetime/current) and new diagnoses.

Do you see a correlation between Happiness and Depression? Yes, happy people are less likely to be depressed.



Depression Myths vs Facts

5 Myths vs Facts About DEPRESSION

MYTH #1:	Depression will not affect me.	
FACT:	Depression is more common than you may think. In the US, more than 17 million adults live with depression yet less than half get treatment. While you may not experience depression, chances are you know someone who does.	
MYTH #2:	Depression and sadness are the same and people can just snap out of it.	
FACT:	Being sad is not the same as having depression. Depression is a mental health condition that causes people to experience extreme sadness, trouble sleeping, loss of energy, difficulty thinking, and more.	
MYTH #3:	People's genetics dictate whether they develop depression.	
FACT:	Depression is caused by one or more factors, including biological factors, life experiences, family history, personality, and environment.	
MYTH #4:	People with depression cannot work in demanding or stressful jobs.	
FACT:	People with depression hold jobs in diverse fields and at all levels of organizations, from the shop floor to the c-suite. Depression impacts people's work and personal lives differently. There is no "one size fits all."	
MYTH #5:	Those impacted by depression do not recover.	
FACT:	With proper treatment, usually consisting of medication, psychotherapy or a combination of both, people with depression can and do get better! Early and effective treatment leads to the best results.	

I'm going to end this article with a few quotes that describe how depression feels:

*What does
depression feel like?*

You don't want to live, but you don't want to die. You don't want to talk to anyone, but you feel very lonely. You wake up in the morning and simply wait for the night to come.

Unknown



A human being can survive almost **anything** as long as she sees the end in sight. **But depression is so insidious**, and it compounds daily, that **it's impossible to ever see the end.**

Elizabeth Wurtzel



**"DEPRESSION
FEELS LIKE
BEING STUCK IN
A DEEP, DARK
HOLE WITH NO
LADDER TO
CLIMB OUT."**



**LIVING WITH
DEPRESSION
FEELS LIKE
WALKING
THROUGH LIFE
WITH A DARK
CLOUD HANGING
OVER YOUR HEAD.**



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