



Understanding your depression

Anyone can feel depressed. At some point in their lives, 10%-25% of women and 5%-12% of men may become clinically depressed.¹ Different things can lead to depression. Learning to deal with those factors can help make you deal with depression.

When you're depressed, you're often overwhelmed with negative thoughts. These thoughts bring about feelings of guilt, shame, anger and anxiety. As a result, you may want to escape or avoid things or people around you.

Doctors, therapists and counselors call the above feelings "symptoms." If you have these symptoms most every day for weeks, you may need help.

If you don't get help, the symptoms can worsen and create problems in your wellbeing, relationships and work/life. In addition to getting help from a doctor or counselor, the following may help you deal with depression.

Think about what makes you feel depressed

What or when are the times when you are more likely to feel sad? In therapy, you may be asked to list things that give you unpleasant feelings. You may notice your feelings are worse at a certain time of day, day of the week or in certain settings.

You may be more at risk when you're very hungry or tired. Maybe a person or situation really upsets you. Listing these things will help you see the conditions and thoughts that lead you to feel depressed.

Think about how you react to depression

How do you feel when you have sad feelings? Perhaps your body feels heavy or you feel a knot in your stomach. Or maybe you sweat and your heart beats quickly.

When you recognize these reactions, you'll see how they can lead to your responses. These may include fatigue, difficulty sleeping and eating and negative thoughts. You may feel like doing less and less.

You may stop taking part in things you used to enjoy. You may not want to go to work or even do things at home. You want to stay in bed or do very little. You might isolate yourself from friends and family.

When you avoid people or things you need to do, you're more likely to feel worse and have more symptoms. It's important to learn and practice coping skills that can help you break this cycle..

You may need help to get better

Depression doesn't go away overnight. It takes work to get better at handling it.

Learn coping skills and get help from people you care about. You can talk about your problems with someone you trust like a therapist or doctor.

¹allaboutdepression.com

This material provides a general overview of the topic. Health information is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment by a therapist, physician or other health care professional. Contact a health care professional with any questions or concerns about specific health care needs.

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