

DEPRESSION / ANXIETY

Mental Health: Let's Talk About It

We all feel low at times. We all worry. But if feelings of sadness or worries persist or are having too great an impact on your life, help is available. Depression and anxiety are some of the most common mental health issues that mental health professionals address. This handout offers a brief description of what these can look like. Your EAP can help if you have questions or concerns.

Thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that may point to depression

Depression is a complex illness with many contributing factors. It can look different from one person to the next. For most people, it's experienced as a deep loss of pleasure and joy. A depressed person will be in a "down" mood most of the time. They may have little or no interest in activities that they used to enjoy. The world and future seem bleak, without hope or possibility. This attitude is ongoing and overshadows daily life. Other indicators may include:

- > Feelings of worthlessness or guilt, excessively and without cause
- > Fatigue, almost no energy
- > Restlessness, anxiety, irritability, or even anger
- > Poor concentration, trouble with memory or decision-making
- > Drop in performance at work or school
- > Weight loss or gain
- > Changes in sleep patterns – insomnia or sleeping too much
- > Physical pain without a physical cause may be due to depression
- > Withdrawing, pulling away from friends, not wanting to go out
- > Getting out of bed or leaving the house can feel impossible
- > Having thoughts of death or suicide

In some cases, depression can be tied to certain circumstances.

For example, some people get depressed feelings after the birth of a child. This may be diagnosed as postpartum depression. It can occur in men and women. It's also possible to feel depressed due to seasonal changes. Called seasonal affective disorder (SAD), depressed feelings start up in fall and winter and fade in spring. Major life changes or losses can also trigger depressed feelings, such as a death, divorce, move, job loss, and so on.

Thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that may point to anxiety

- > Continuously thinking and worrying about everyday events
- > Finding that fears or worries are hard to control and cause complications in daily work and social settings
- > Edginess, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, irritability, muscle tension, trouble falling or staying asleep
- > Experiencing panic attacks: instances of extreme fear that start abruptly and build to a rapid peak. An attack may include rapid heartbeat, sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, the sensation of choking, chest pain, nausea, dizziness, disorientation, fear of losing control or dying, numbness, chills, and hot flashes.
- > Intense feelings of stress or fear in social situations.

Get support

If you or someone you know is experiencing these type of feelings, a mental health professional can help. You can call your EAP and ask for a free telephone consultation with a trained professional. You can also get assistance with setting up an appointment for an office visit. If there is any concern about suicide, call 911, National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255) or your EAP immediately.

Reference

National Institutes of Health. (n.d.). Depression. Retrieved January, 3, 2017 from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>

National Institutes of Health. (n.d.). Anxiety disorders. Retrieved January, 3, 2017 from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml>

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