

NEWSLETTER

A Series of Educational Articles from your Faculty and Employee Assistance Program

DEPRESSION WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Depression is a “whole-person” illness – it affects your mood, body, thoughts, and behavior. It is not a “blue mood”, or having a bad day once in awhile. It is not a sign of personal weakness, and cannot be willed away. People experiencing depression cannot just “snap out of it” – depression can last for weeks, months, or years. Depression can be brought on by difficult situations in a persons’ life, or by a chemical imbalance of certain chemicals in the brain. Research has shown that often depressive illnesses tend to run in families, however not everyone with a family history of depression will develop the illness.

Below are some important facts about depression:

❖ *Depression is one the most treatable of all major illnesses – there is an 80% - 90% effectiveness rate with appropriate treatment.*

❖ *Twice as many women are*



diagnosed with depression than men, most in the age range of 30-34. Several factors may influence this statistic – women are often more likely to seek help for depression, and women are generally more conditioned to express feelings and emotions than men. Women often have situational factors that may contribute to depression – lower pay, less influence in the workplace, and more role conflict. Doctors may tend to over diagnose women and under diagnose men with depression.

❖ *2/3 of an estimated 11 million victims of depression each year go untreated.*

❖ *Depression among the elderly is often*

misdiagnosed – the memory problems common with depression are sometimes labeled “senility”. Frequently, if an elderly person is suffering from physical or mental limits due to age, they are also depressed.

❖ *More and more children and teenagers are being diagnosed with depression.* Symptoms in children and teens may be similar to those of adults, or they may look somewhat different. Children may have vague or specific fears, anxiety, or express more anger if they are depressed.



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❖ *Results of a recent poll show:*

- 12% of people surveyed said they would take medication for depression.
- 65% said they would take medication for a headache.
- 78% said they would simply live with depression until it passed.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

Not everyone who is depressed experiences all of these symptoms, and the severity of the symptoms often varies for each individual.

Depression can include:

- Persistent sadness or “empty” feeling
- Loss of interest in pleasure or ordinarily fulfilling activities
- Decreased energy, fatigue – feeling “slowed down”
- Sleep disturbances (insomnia, sleeping too much, early morning waking)
- Eating disturbances (loss of appetite, weight loss or weight gain)

- Difficulty concentrating, focusing, making decisions, and memory
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and helplessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts
- Irritability
- Excessive crying

Chronic aches and pains that do not respond to treatment

- ✓ Irritability
- ✓ Difficulty with spouse or partner
- ✓ Sexual problems
- ✓ Increased alcohol use
- ✓ Problems with parenting
- ✓ Poor decision making
- ✓ Loss of interest in hobbies

Depression in the workplace



can result in:

- ✓ Decreased productivity
- ✓ Morale problems
- ✓ Safety problems, accidents
- ✓ Absenteeism
- ✓ Alcohol or drug use
- ✓ Difficulty in dealing with coworkers
- ✓ Frequent complaints of unexplained aches and pains.

Depression in our personal life

can result in:

- ✓ Withdrawal from friends and family

The most important thing to know and remember is that help is available. A variety of treatment options are available for depression. At times, counseling alone may be recommended, while at other times medication may also be indicated. It is important to have a thorough assessment in order to determine the most useful treatment for you.

IQ Health of Virginia’s Faculty and Employee Assistance Program can help! If you think you or someone you care about is suffering from depression, all you need to do is call the FEAP to schedule a confidential appointment at no cost to you. The FEAP counselor can work with you to help determine the most appropriate course of action for your specific needs.

You can reach the FEAP 24 hours a day at:

1-800 847-9355
or
434-243-2643 (8-5)