

A woman with dark, curly hair is looking out a window. The window is covered in raindrops, and the view outside is blurred, suggesting a rainy day. The woman has a contemplative or sad expression.

Depression

Everyone experiences disappointment and sadness in life. But when the “down times” interfere with your ability to function, you may be suffering from a common mental illness called depression.

Statistics

- Women are **2x more likely** to develop depression.
- About **one in 10 people** will experience depression in their lifetime.
- **Less than 50%** of those affected by depression receive treatment.
- Most people experience their first depressive episode **between ages 20-30 years old**.
- **Nearly one-third** of college students (30%) report feeling depressed with a negative impact on school performance.

Common Signs and Symptoms

- Diminished concentration
- Fatigue/low energy
- Feeling guilty
- Hopelessness and worthlessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure
- Persistent sadness
- Sleep difficulties and appetite changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide

****Symptoms must last at least two weeks and cause significant distress****



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Healthy Coping Skills

- *Behavioral Activation*: Focus on engaging in activities you enjoy and prioritize self-care.
 - Choose an activity: exercise (walk, bike ride, swim, yoga), socialize (call a friend, visit family, join a club), responsibility (clean, pay bills, homework), hobbies (sports, gardening, play music, hike), personal care (dress up, get a haircut, prepare a healthy meal)
 - Practice your chosen activity: Start small, make a plan and bring a friend.
- *Social Support*: Resist social isolation and instead lean on social supports can improve resilience to stress and depression.
 - Lean on your existing relationships, say “yes” to socializing and join a support group.
- *Three Good Things*: Positive experiences can be minimized while negative experiences can be magnified. Gratitude helps shift focus towards positive experiences rather than negative ones
 - Write about three positive experiences from your day and ask yourself “Why did this happen? Why was this good thing meaningful? And how can I experience more of this good thing?” ****Repeat****
- *Mindfulness*: Pay attention to the present moment, take a step back and notice your thoughts/feelings without judgment.
 - Observe time and place, posture, awareness of breath or wandering mind

****A combination of psychotherapy and medication has been found to be the most effective treatment.****



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