

Signs of Depression

More than just a temporary feeling of sadness or moodiness, the causes of depression can vary greatly. Depression can come without warning or any notable life event. For others, it could be triggered by trauma. And while some could be genetically predisposed to this condition, it all boils down to one thing — sufferers need help.

Physical Issues

Physical symptoms are among the first things others who live with sufferers notice since it usually involves a disruption of their regular routine or way of life.

And since depression symptoms are not just mental but can also affect someone physically, these signs can be a clear giveaway that something might be wrong.

- Difficulty with sleeping
- Lack of energy
- Under or overeating
- Significant weight loss or gain
- Persistent muscle aches, cramps, or headaches
- Digestive issues

Potential Physical Ailments Caused by Depression:

- Fibromyalgia
- Chronic pain
- Migraines or persistent headaches

Psychological Issues

Being observant is good, but often we have to listen as well. Sufferers have often associated how they feel with emotions like fear, mental confusion, anguish, despair, and deep sorrow for an extended period.

Common Depression Phrases:

“I feel empty inside.”

“I just hurt all the time.”

“I don’t care about anything anymore.”

"I can't do anything right."

"I don't want to go on any longer."

Noticing their action also will help in noticing depression in another. Those suffering from depression often:

- Cry often, to the point of exhaustion, very frequently
- Experience a seemingly unending feeling of sadness
- Withdraw from social activities and cancel plans for little or no reason
- Little to no interest in activities they once enjoyed
- Everyday tasks make them anxious or confused
- Act extremely hard on themselves when they make mistakes, viewing themselves as 'failures'
- Experiencing persistent mood swings, ranging from irritability, anger, and crying

Other Signs

While no list of depression symptoms is entirely comprehensive, several other things loved ones might notice:

- Decrease of cognitive ability — being unable to focus or concentrate, losing track of a given task, or easily forgetting things.
- Substance abuse — often used as an ineffective means of escape from how they are feeling, sufferers of depression could turn to alcohol, illegal drugs, or other means.
- Self-harm — including cutting, picking fights at school or work, or engaging in dangerous activities that offer a momentary thrill.
- Experience panic attacks — often triggered by an event or some other cause, significant anxiety (and its symptoms) can coexist for someone dealing with depression.

Types of Depression

Treatment options can vary, depending on what type of depression a sufferer may have. There are many types out there, but consider a few of what the majority experience:

Major Depressive Disorder or Clinical Depression

Symptoms usually last anywhere from two weeks to six months or longer. It can majorly disrupt a sufferer's life, including their relationships, work habits, and daily routine.

Bipolar Disorder or Manic Depression

Emotional extremes are common, like a roller coaster ride going between intense hyperactivity (manias) and devastating lows (depressions).

Persistent Depressive Disorder or Dysthymia

Symptoms are usually not as intense as major depression, but much more long-lasting and chronic.

Postpartum Depression

A crippling and exhausting emotional condition that affects many mothers after they give birth.

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Lack of sunlight in the fall and winter months can bring on this type of depression for several months.

Treatments for Depression

There are so many options available for those who suffer from depression that it can seem confusing.

One of the best ways to help a loved one with depression is to help them realize there is no shame in depression. Making sure that they feel supported and loved can be extremely helpful in assisting them toward treatment.

Doctors may help many sufferers of depression, but many will need more specialized treatment.

Treatments Under Medical Professionals

Certain treatment possibilities under the care of a family doctor or psychiatric physician could include:

- Antidepressant medication
- Antianxiety or antipsychotic medications
- Holistic medications – herbal vitamins or supplements
- Psychotherapy – also known as talk therapy, with a certified professional
- Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) – magnetic pulses are noninvasively delivered to parts of the brain that controls mood to decrease sad moods and stimulate positive feelings

- Light therapy – usually given to those affected by Seasonal Affective Disorder, a sufferer is exposed to a lightbox mimicking natural light to boost mood. Lightboxes can be purchased individually but it is highly recommended that a sufferer does so under the advice of a medical professional.

Alternate Forms of Treatment

Many have found that relying solely on just medication does not always do the trick, but a combination of other healthy lifestyle choices and changes has greatly helped. These could include:

Start a healthy dietary routine

This includes eating a well-balanced diet with plenty of vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, and complex carbohydrates.

Exercise several times a week

Increases endorphins and other “good mood” chemicals in the body, thus helping your brain to deal with stress and lower the effects of certain symptoms of depression.

Meditation or relaxation

Taking the time to slow down and reflect can greatly alleviate stress, heighten the overall mood, and bring focus to certain situations that might otherwise seem overwhelming.

Reminders For Family and Loved Ones of Sufferers

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