

UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION

"Why do I feel like this?"

THE **HOPE** LINE

TheHopeLine.com

DEPRESSION

Depression can be described as a prolonged, unexplained sadness that impacts your everyday life. Individuals who are depressed often feel trapped beneath feelings of overwhelming hopelessness for an extended period of time. No matter how impossible it may seem to overcome, there is hope for those who suffer from depression.



I felt totally and completely alone...like I was on an island all by myself and no one could help me. ”

- Lacey

Ever since I was child, I've had a really big problem with depression. I'd do alright, fighting it back and making everything seem like it's alright for a little bit, but it always comes back.

- *Cody*



YOU ARE NOT ALONE

DEPRESSION STATISTICS

16 million Americans have at least one major depressive episode each year.

350 million people worldwide suffer from depression.

An estimated **3 million** young people in the United States had at least one major depressive episode in the past year. This number represents 12.5% of the U.S. population aged 12 to 17.

1 in 10 people will have a depressive episode at least once in their life.

Women experience depression at a rate that is **nearly twice** that of men.

About **6 million** men in America struggle with depression in a year.

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- Feelings of overwhelming sadness, hopelessness, or anger
 - Low self-esteem or feeling worthless
 - Crying a lot for no specific reason
 - Gaining or losing weight without trying to
 - Inability to sleep regularly
 - Inability to concentrate or make decisions
 - Avoiding enjoyable activities or hobbies
 - Feeling mentally and physically exhausted
 - Thoughts of death or suicide, or thinking that "More people will love me if I'm dead" or "Everyone is better off with me out of the picture."
- 



There are a variety of possible causes for depression, from poor physical health to experiencing a traumatic event.

WHAT CAUSES DEPRESSION?

Causes for depression generally fall into these categories:

Physical causes of depression include hormonal imbalance, medication side effects, drug abuse, chronic illness, insufficient rest or exercise, and genetic vulnerability.

Emotional causes of depression could be internalized stress from problems at home, school, work, relationships or a personal crisis. Suppressed fear, such as the fear of being alone, or repressed anger about a loss or injustice, are also possible emotional causes of depression.

Genetics can increase a person's likelihood of experiencing depression. Though it's not a guarantee, having a family history of mental illness often means you are more likely to suffer from it yourself.



TYPES OF DEPRESSION

Major Depressive Disorder

When you have a single bout of depression or recurring episodes over a short period of time.

Persistent Depressive Disorder

When your depression lasts two or more years.

Bipolar Disorder

When you experience cycles of depression that alternate with extreme highs called "manic episodes."

Seasonal Affective Disorder

When your mood is affected by sunlight or the changing of the seasons, making you more likely to be depressed during the winter.

Postpartum Depression

When you experience a depressive episode caused by hormonal changes following childbirth, lack of sleep, and the stress of taking care of a new baby.

Psychotic Depression

When major depression or bipolar disorders are accompanied by hallucinations, delusions, or paranoia.

KEEP IN MIND

Depression is NOT a weakness.

Depression is NOT something to be ashamed of.

Depression is NOT a condition that you can “snap out of” or “will away.”

Depression is NOT something to keep secret.





DEPRESSION

For most people who are depressed, overcoming it is a journey. Your depression will likely fluctuate over time rather than you just “snapping out of it” one day. There are a lot of things you can do to help yourself get to a better place emotionally.

David shares with **HeartSupport**, "People feel no one understands them.. that's really not the case." He says, "If you can realize that and be willing to talk to someone, people will actually help you."





Ways to Cope with a Depressive Episode

1

Stay connected to your emotional support system, especially close friends and family. A common mistake many depressed people make is to isolate themselves, which actually intensifies their feelings of worthlessness.

2

Ask for help if you are struggling or stressed. Often, sharing a situation or problem with a friend or loved one can help alleviate the burden. Confide in a trusted parent, adult or friend that you are depressed so they can encourage you and keep you accountable.

3

Keeping your body healthy has a huge impact on your emotional health. Exercising regularly releases feel-good endorphins in your brain and builds your immunity, which can help with depression. Go outside for a walk a few times a week, stay hydrated, get the right amount of sleep, and choose nutritious foods.

4

Find a creative outlet to express yourself, such as writing or drawing. It can help you process your thoughts and feelings constructively.

5

If you continue to deal with depression, talk with your doctor to see what options are available for help. There are many effective treatments for depression, so don't lose hope!

The 2 most common treatment options are:

Medication as Prescribed by a Doctor

Antidepressants are used to re-establish healthy levels of certain neurotransmitters produced in the brain.

Psychological Counseling

Talking through your depression with a counselor can be very helpful.

6

Be gentle and patient with yourself, give yourself time to heal.

If you or a loved one is dealing with thoughts of death or suicide, please reach out for help! Talk to a trusted adult, parent, pastor or school counselor about how you've been feeling.

If you need support **now**, call the Suicide & Crisis lifeline at 988.

HOW TO HELP SOMEONE WHO'S DEPRESSED

If you've noticed a friend or loved one acting unusual and suspect they may be depressed, these are common signs to look for:

Your friend doesn't want to do things you both love to do

Your friend starts abusing drugs and/or alcohol

Your friend stops going to classes, after school activities, or work

Your friend talks about feeling bad, ugly, stupid or worthless

Your friend stays alone a lot of the time

Your friend talks about death or suicide

If you suspect a depressed friend or loved one is suicidal, talk with them about it in a non-judgmental, loving way.

Offer support by letting them know you are there for them, listen thoughtfully, and be gentle but persistent.

Here are some tips to encourage someone dealing with depression:

1 Don't judge what they are feeling. Rather, acknowledge that their pain is very real. It will mean a lot to have someone validate what they are feeling.

2 Check up on them often and invite them to hang out or do an activity you both enjoy. Don't give up every time they bail or say "no." That's the depression talking, and your friend needs you to keep reaching out.

3 Give your friend or loved one this suicide hotline number to reach out for help if they are dealing with suicidal thoughts: ***Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.***

4 Write your friend or loved one an encouraging note letting them know you care about them and they are not alone.

5 ***Share this Guide!*** Struggling with depression can feel very lonely, even with the support of friends. Having this information about depression in front of them may be helpful to your friend.

6 Let them know about other resources at TheHopeLine.

Here are a couple more trusted resources for understanding depression:

Heart Support is an online community founded by Jake Luhrs of August Burns Red, whose purpose is to encourage, inspire and bring a message of hope.

Focus on the Family can connect you with a counselor. Call **1-855-771-4357** (Mon - Fri, 6am - 8pm MT)

5 THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER SAY TO A FRIEND IN PAIN



It is tempting to want to “fix” your friend and say things you think may be helpful. However, even though you have the best intentions, you need to be careful how you choose your words.

Here are some phrases to avoid:

“What do you have to be depressed about? There are people who have it much worse than you.”

The depressed person already knows that and likely feels ashamed. Often the most frustrating part of depression is that they can’t explain *why* they feel like they do. Imagine what it must feel like to have a good life and not be able to enjoy it. By asking them this question, you will make them feel even worse for not seeming grateful for what they have.

"Happiness is a choice. You just need to change your mindset and focus on the positive."

When you say this to someone struggling with depression, you are essentially telling them that they are CHOOSING to be sad... that they are bringing this depression on themselves. If it was as simple as choosing to be happy, don't you think they would?

"You don't need medication."

Unless you are a doctor, *DO NOT* give clinical or medical advice. Leave that to the professionals. Rather, encourage someone facing depression to talk it over with their doctor, and do not judge them if they follow their doctor's advice to try medication.

"You're depressed again?"

They are already scared to be falling into depression again. Part of that fear is that they're becoming a burden to their loved ones. For you to sound annoyed does not help assuage their worries.

"Are you reading your Bible enough? Are you praying enough?"

To someone who is depressed, asking them this question feels as if you are saying, "If you just trusted God more or had more faith, you wouldn't be depressed." As if somehow you're suggesting it is their fault God hasn't healed them or that God acts based on our behavior. However, **none** of us can "DO ENOUGH" to make God act how we think He should. Thankfully, God's love and provision are not based on our performance. God's ways are wiser than ours, and He loves us like crazy. Instead, remind your friend that God is a **healer**, a **refuge**, and **never gives up** fighting for those who are in pain.

A SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE ON DEPRESSION

Depression can feel like an overwhelming, hopeless experience.

You may even feel like your depression will never end, but **there is hope and help**.

There are SO many verses in the Bible that invite you to “cast off your burdens” and let the Lord sustain you. No matter what problems or issues you’re dealing with, know that God loves you and you are valued in His eyes.

In fact, the Bible says that Jesus came to earth and died so everyone can

have “**more and better life than they ever dreamed of...**” [John 10:10 The Message].

God has a vested interest in your life and knows you by name! He wants you to feel loved, accepted, and joyful. Whatever your struggles, there is **a solution**, and God Himself is rooting for you to find it.

>> THE SOLUTION

Don't lose hope. Keep fighting. **You can** find peace in the midst of depression.

Verses for Hope When Struggling with Depression



If you want to know more about having a relationship with God or have questions about depression, **chat online** with a HopeCoach at [TheHopeLine.com](https://www.thehopeline.com).

Check out our other eBooks:

[Understanding Grief and Loss](#)

[Understanding Suicide](#)

[Understanding Self-Worth](#)

[Understanding Lying](#)

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