

Understanding Depression

What is depression?

It is common to get depression confused with sadness. We often think that if we are very sad then we are considered depressed. Depression is much more intense than just feeling sad.

Depression causes a low mood and numbness, loss of interest in things you used to enjoy, low energy or motivation, and feelings of hopelessness.

What causes depression?

There are many things that can contribute to the onset of depression. Factors include but are not limited to genetics, severe anxiety, situational triggers, grief, poor coping skills and life stressors. Life stressors like illness, work stress, trauma, relationship issues, discontentment, history of abuse or neglect, bullying and substance abuse trigger depression.

What kinds of depression are there?

- **Major depressive disorder** (MDD) can be chronic or recurrent. It happens in cycles for at least 2 weeks.
- **Persistent depressive disorder** (dysthymia) is a consistent depressed mood lasting at least 2 years.
- **Situational depression** is triggered by difficulty coping with life stressors.
- **Post-partum depression** is depression that some women may experience after giving birth.
- **Seasonal affect disorder** (SAD) is triggered by transitions into the colder seasons like winter.

What does depression feel like?

Psychological symptoms	Physiological and behavioral symptoms
Loss of interest in enjoyable activities, change in appetite, weight loss or gain, prolonged sadness, poor self-image, loss of energy and motivation, difficulty concentrating or focusing, guilt, self-defeating thoughts, thoughts of harm self	Anxiety, fatigue, weight loss or gain, crying spells, panic attacks, self-harm, forgetfulness, headaches, muscle aches, unexplained pain

What is depression like for you?

Psychological symptoms

Physiological and behavioral symptoms

How does depression affect your life?

What are your current coping skills? Are they effective?

Please circle how severe would you rate your depression: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10