

# Older Adults

DEPRESSION AWARENESS



## are you feeling **down?**

### What is depression?

Everyone feels down or sad sometimes, but these feelings usually go away after a few days.

When you have depression, you have trouble with daily life for weeks at a time. Depression is a serious illness that needs treatment. If left untreated, depression can lead to suicide.

Depression is a common problem among older adults, but it is not a normal part of aging. It may be ignored because for some older adults who have depression, sadness is not their main problem. They may have other, less obvious signs of depression or they may not be willing to talk about their feelings. This makes it hard for doctors to recognize that their patient has depression.

### What are the different types of depression?

There are several forms of depression. The most common forms are:

**Major depression** - Changing your ability to work, sleep, study, eat, and enjoy life.

**Minor depression** - similar to major depression, but symptoms are less severe and may not last as long.

### What are the signs and symptoms of depression?

Different people show different signs of depression. Some signs of depression are:

- Feeling sad
- Feeling mad, nervous, like there is no hope, or guilty
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Feeling very tired
- Not being able to focus or remember
- Not being able to sleep, or sleeping too much
- Overeating, or not wanting to eat at all
- Thoughts of killing yourself or trying to kill yourself
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or stomach problems

**Call the Behavioral Health Services directly at 1.877.221.9295.**

Recovery can, will, and DOES happen.

## How can I help a loved one who is depressed?

If you know someone who has depression, first help him or her to see a doctor or mental health professional.

- Give support, understanding, patience, and encouragement.
- Talk to him or her, and listen carefully.
- Never ignore comments about suicide, and always tell them to your loved one's therapist or doctor.
- Invite him or her out for walks, outings, and other activities.
- Remind him or her that with time and treatment, the depression will lift

## How can I help myself if I am depressed?

As you go through treatment you will start to feel better. Remember that if you are taking medicine for depression, it may take weeks for it to start working. If at first it does not work, be open to trying another. You may need to try a few different medications before finding one that works for you.

Try to do things that you used to enjoy before you had depression, even when you don't expect to enjoy them, they can help lift your spirits.

## know the **causes**

### What causes depression?

Several factors, may lead to depression.

Family health background - people with a family history of depression may be more likely to get it than those whose families do not have the illness.

Stress/brain chemistry/etc.

For older adults who have had depression for the first time later in life, the depression may be related to changes that occur in the brain and body as a person ages.

### If you are in a crisis

Older adults with depression are at risk for suicide. If you are thinking about harming yourself or attempting suicide, tell someone who can help immediately.

- Call your doctor.
- Call 911 for emergency services.
- Go to the nearest hospital emergency room.
- Call the toll-free, 24-hour hotline of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1.800.237.TALK (1.800.273.8255); TTY: 1.800.799.4TTY (4889) to be connected to a trained counselor at a suicide crisis center nearest you