



Employee Assistance Program

Down or Depressed?

There are times when people may feel like they have the “blues” or feelings of sadness and unhappiness. Usually these feelings pass; however, for some people, these feelings may suggest a more significant problem, depression.

According to NIH’s National Institute of Mental Health, major depression is one of the most common mental disorders in the United States. In 2014, an estimated 15.7 million adults aged 18 or older had at least one major depressive episode in the past year.

Symptoms of depression vary by individual. If you think that you may be experiencing depression, you may want to contact your EAP or other mental health professional for help. Before taking this step, there are some basic tools that you can use to get a better sense of how you’re feeling. For instance, the Mayo Clinic identified several symptoms that may “occur most of the day, nearly every day” during episodes of depression. Using these symptoms as a checklist to evaluate how you’re feeling might be helpful.

I am experiencing:

- ✓ Feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness or hopelessness
- ✓ Angry outbursts, irritability or frustration
- ✓ Loss of interest or pleasure in most or all normal activities
- ✓ Insomnia or sleeping too much
- ✓ Tiredness and lack of energy
- ✓ Changes in appetite
- ✓ Anxiety, agitation or restlessness
- ✓ Slowed thinking, speaking or body movements
- ✓ Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- ✓ Trouble concentrating, making decisions and remembering things
- ✓ Unexplained physical problems, such as back pain or headaches

This list is by no means all-inclusive, but it gives you a sense of the emotions and other symptoms most often associated with depression. In addition, there are various online quizzes that have been developed to help people determine if they might be depressed. One example is “Are you bummed out or depressed?” from *Prevention* magazine, a 12-question quiz which covers areas such as sleep, weight, and appetite as well as concentration, organization and outlook on the future (www.prevention.com/mind-body/emotional-health/are-you-bummed-out-or-depressed).

If you are concerned you are depressed, make an appointment to see your doctor as soon as you can. If you're reluctant to seek treatment, talk to a friend or loved one, a health care professional, a faith leader or someone else you trust.

Remember there is a difference between feeling down and being depressed, and there are resources available from your EAP to help you determine the next best steps for your situation.



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