

Helpful Resources Depression

Depression

We all have times when we feel down. It's normal to feel sad when a relationship ends, a good friend moves away or someone we care about dies. The stress of a heavy study load, financial difficulties or unemployment also affects our mood. However, the gloomy feelings usually pass and we still experience happy times with friends or family.

How will I know if I'm depressed?

Sometimes the sad feelings don't go away - we stop enjoying things that used to be fun. We might have difficulty keeping up with study, or find it hard to even get out of bed in the morning. This could mean we have become depressed.

If you've been feeling miserable more often than not over the past two weeks or more, and you've stopped enjoying things that used to be fun, you might be depressed. Check the symptoms below - if you tick three or more it is likely you are experiencing a bout of depression.

- Finding it hard to get motivated and feel interested in things
- Wanting to avoid friends and everyday activities.
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Losing interest in eating, or overeating.
- Losing weight, without dieting, or gaining weight.
- Thinking about, or planning suicide
 - Having unpleasant, negative thoughts, like feeling guilty or that you are a bad person
- Getting pains in your body or headaches that don't seem to have any physical cause.

How did I get depressed?

Sometimes stress builds up in our lives and overwhelms our ability to cope. You may have lost someone you love, had a baby, or been too busy for too long. Ongoing stress like coping on a low income, facing rising debt, or feeling lonely and isolated can lead to depression.

Sometimes people get depressed for no obvious reason; the heavy feelings just seem to come out of the blue. This sometimes happens when people come from families who seem more vulnerable to becoming depressed after relatively mild stress. No matter how you became depressed, the effects are debilitating and will affect your study if left untreated.

What if it's the blues?

It may still be useful for you to discuss your worries and low mood with a professional Counselor.

Am I the only one who feels this way?

No. Depression is more common than most people think. In fact it is about as common as asthma! One in seven people will experience a bout of depression at some stage in their lives.

Ok, so I'm depressed - what now?

Depression can be treated. It's important to treat it like any other illness and seek help. Depression involves changes in brain chemistry and can influence the way we respond to our world. Options for dealing with depression include –

- Talking with a counselor who will:
 - a) Help you learn skills for solving problems, planning ahead and improving interactions with others.
 - b) Help you see the positive side of yourself, others, and your circumstances.
 - c) Assist your relationships with others.
- See your doctor to discuss the possibility of using antidepressant medicine to correct the imbalance of chemicals in the brain.

Often counseling, together with lifestyle changes (e.g. reducing stress, cutting down on alcohol) is useful for helping depression. In some cases medication may be necessary to help resolve a severe or long-standing bout of depression.

If you think you are depressed:

- Take our online screening for depression
- If you would like to make an appointment at the Counseling Center, ext. 2125