

## Does this sound like you?

- You feel sad or cry a lot and it won't go away
- You feel guilty for no reason, feel you're no good, or have lost your confidence
- Life seems meaningless or like nothing good is ever going to happen again
- You have a negative attitude a lot of the time, or it seems like you have no feelings
- You don't feel like doing a lot of the things you used to enjoy, and you want to be left alone most of the time
- You have a hard time concentrating and making decisions
- You forget things
- You get irritated and overreact to little things
- Your sleep or eating patterns have changed
- You think about death, feel like you're dying, or have thoughts of suicide

If you have experienced some of these concerns, you may have depression. Depression is a real illness that needs to be treated.

## What is depression?

Everybody feels sad or blue now and then. If you're sad most of the time and it's giving you problems with school, work, relationships, or your behavior, the problem may be depression.

Sometimes people experience depression after something like a divorce in the family, major financial problems, a loved one dying, home life problems, or breaking up with a significant other.

Other times, depression just happens. Individuals often react to the pain of depression by getting into trouble with alcohol, drugs, or sex, trouble with school or bad grades, or problems with family or friends.

## When does depression start and how long does it last?

Depression can affect anyone at any age. It occurs more often in females than males. An untreated episode of depression can last several months. People often experience more than one episode of depression in their lifetimes.

## Am I the only person with this illness?

No. You are not alone. In any year, at least 19 million Americans have depression. One-fourth of all women and one-eighth of all men will suffer at least one episode of depression during their lifetimes.

## How can I help myself?

Talk to a counselor or a doctor about your concerns. Explain how your concerns keep you from doing everyday things and living your life. If you have suicidal thoughts, seek help immediately, contact a counselor or doctor, call 911, or call the national suicide prevention lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

## How can a doctor or counselor help me?

Talking to a counselor helps many people with depression. Therapy can help you change the relationships, thoughts or behaviors that contribute to depression.

A doctor may give you medication. Medication may help people with depression feel better after a few weeks. If one medication doesn't work, others should be tried.