

# Depression

All of us experience sadness, grief, and passing low mood states. If the depression continues for a significant time and interferes significantly with your ability to function, it may be clinical depression.

Symptoms of clinical depression include sadness, a change in appetite or weight, insomnia or oversleeping, lack of energy, loss of interest in activities, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, and difficulty concentrating. Depression can negatively affect family relationships, friendships and the ability to work or succeed in school. People with depression may wrongly believe that they should be able to shake off the symptoms themselves and so avoid seeking treatment. They may also not recognize that they have a treatable condition. The Counseling and Advising Center can help you determine whether you are experiencing a probably clinical depression.

Depression affects nearly 10% of American adults in a given year. Following are some suggestions for those who are experiencing it.

- **Counseling or therapy** can give you a sounding board to help you get back your perspective and return you to balance.
- If your depression is severe, antidepressant medication may give a jump-start to your healing. Talk to a counselor or your physician about this option.
- **Make yourself get up in the morning** and avoid sleeping in, even if you don't feel like it. Getting up and moving around helps fight depression; sleeping late feeds it.
- **Reduce your intake of carbs and especially sugar**, while amping up the protein. You may feel that you want the quick charge of energy that sugar and simple carbs provide, but that same jolt of sugar floods the bloodstream, spikes, and then causes a crash, leaving you more depressed than ever. The same is true for caffeine and alcohol.
- The more you can **move and exercise**, the better off you'll be. (Although you probably won't feel like it, it will make you feel better afterward.)
- **Get outdoors** and get as much light as you can.
- **Try to catch yourself at negative self-talk**, criticism, scolding and name-calling, and instead deliberately change your internal voice to say something positive, encouraging and kind. It may sound hokey, but it's an important skill to learn for healing depression.
- Try to force yourself to **keep up your schedule**, meet your responsibilities and stay active. But if you cannot do so, forgive yourself and use the time in as nourishing a way as possible to yourself.
- Try listening to **guided imagery**. The Counseling Center has a CD called Combat Depression by [healthhourneys](#) that you can sample with a counselor.