LIFE WITH DEPRESSION

PEOPLE WITH DEPRESSION SAY IT FEEL LIKE:

You are a burden to everyone
Your head is surrounded by a thick, black, unrelenting fog
Exhausting, like you’re living in a cage
Hopeless. Like there is no person or thing that can help you forget about everything that makes you sad all of the time
An overwhelming sense of sadness about life and about all that you are and all you do

You need to hug someone. But at the same time, you don’t want any human to hug you
You have a lump in your throat, as if you’re about to cry at any moment, all day
Difficult to tell if you can trust your own perception of reality

You want your life to get better, but everything is so hard to do and you have no motivation
All you want is to go home and just curl up and fall asleep forever
Drowning and no one sees it and you feel helpless against the water around you

A needle of pain pricking at your body at every chance it gets
It’s hard to be happy, to love or accept love
You’ll never be happy again, even when you know that’s not true
Heavy and tired, like you’re moving through quicksand

You have a lump in your throat, as if you’re about to cry at any moment, all day
Difficult to tell if you can trust your own perception of reality

A dark, empty room with no escape
You are numb to the world
Don’t feel like your own true self

Making it hard to be happy, to love or accept love

A needle of pain pricking at your body at every chance it gets

If you see these signs in yourself or someone you know, it’s important to talk to a healthcare provider about it. If you’re in crisis, please seek immediate help.

DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS ARE REAL ILLNESSES THAT INVOLVE EXTENDED PERIODS OF FEELING EXTREMELY LOW AND DISRUPT A PERSON’S ABILITY TO ENJOY LIFE. THEY AFFECT:

THE BODY
Causing: headaches, changes in appetite which cause either weight gain or loss, constantly feeling tired, body aches and pains, a weakened immune system, and sleeping too much or not enough.

THOUGHTS
Causing people to feel: inadequate (like they aren’t good enough), extremely sad, guilty, irritable, lonely, empty, pessimistic (having a negative outlook), preoccupied with death or suicide, unable to focus, or unmotivated.

BEHAVIORS
Causing: withdrawal from social activities, decreased interest in sex, slowed speech, difficulty finishing (or even starting) tasks, or not keeping up with daily responsibilities.

Speak up about your own experiences
Help others who may be struggling to explain what they are going through to figure out if they are showing signs of a mental illness
Break down the discrimination and stigma surrounding mental illnesses
Show others that they are not alone in their feelings and their symptoms

DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS ARE REAL ILLNESSES THAT INVOLVE EXTENDED PERIODS OF FEELING EXTREMELY LOW AND DISRUPT A PERSON’S ABILITY TO ENJOY LIFE. THEY AFFECT:

THE BODY
Causing: headaches, changes in appetite which cause either weight gain or loss, constantly feeling tired, body aches and pains, a weakened immune system, and sleeping too much or not enough.

THOUGHTS
Causing people to feel: inadequate (like they aren’t good enough), extremely sad, guilty, irritable, lonely, empty, pessimistic (having a negative outlook), preoccupied with death or suicide, unable to focus, or unmotivated.

BEHAVIORS
Causing: withdrawal from social activities, decreased interest in sex, slowed speech, difficulty finishing (or even starting) tasks, or not keeping up with daily responsibilities.

Having a Depressive Disorder is not:

- Being sad about a bad situation
- Grieving the loss of a loved one
- All in a person’s head
- Overreacting or being overly emotional
- Something that everybody experiences
- Something that a person just “gets over”
- A pity party
- Being stuck in a rut
- Laziness
- A choice
- A sign of weakness
- A character flaw
### TIPS FOR TACKLING DEPRESSION

1. **Figure out what lifts your spirits and make a list you can refer to when you start to feel down.** Some things you might include: funny websites, movies that make you laugh, looking at pictures of good times, playing with a pet, taking a bath, hiking, puzzles, phone numbers of people you like talking to or places you like to go.

2. **Get moving to get your body’s feel-good chemicals flowing.** Take a brisk walk, go up and down the stairs, or do some jumping jacks. Aim for 30 minutes daily - you can break it up into three, 10-minute sessions to make it easier.

3. **Remind yourself that everything does not suck by keeping a journal.** Take some time each night to write down three things that you’re grateful for, three things you achieved during the day, and/or three good things that happened.

4. **Make an appointment with a therapist.** It might take a while to get an appointment, but once you have that relationship it will be easier to set up appointments in the future. Taking that first step can make you feel like you’ve made progress, give you a sense of control over your condition, and hope for the future.

5. **If your to-do list seems daunting, take a few moments to determine how much time it actually takes to complete each task.** For instance, folding laundry may seem like a real pain, but only takes about 10 minutes. Rather than allowing it to sit and become a big, intimidating laundry pile, you’ll feel a sense of accomplishment in getting it done. Start with quick tasks and build up momentum to taking care of the more time-consuming ones.

6. **Call someone you trust and ask them to talk to you or even just sit with you.** Having a non-judging person present can help you open up, or at least feel less alone. If you can’t get in touch with a friend or family member, go to www.warmline.org to find someone to talk to in your state.

7. **Challenge your negative thoughts about yourself.** Being depressed may make you feel like something you’ve done was horrible, or that you’re ugly, or that you don’t deserve good things to happen. But if a loved one told you they were feeling that way—what would you say to them?

---

### SOME OF THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS INCLUDE:

- Major Depressive Disorder,
- Persistent Depressive Disorder (Dysthymia),
- Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder, Seasonal Affective Disorder, and Post-Partum Depression.

Depression is also a feature of Bipolar Disorder.

To learn more visit: www.mhageorgia.org

### SCREENING CAN HELP CATCH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS EARLY

If you think you may be showing signs of a depressive disorder, take a screen at mhascreening.org.

A screening is not a diagnosis, but it can be a helpful tool for starting a conversation with your doctor or a loved one about your mental health.

**Mental Health America of Georgia (MHA of GA) strives to be an innovative leader in mental health system transformation. MHA of GA is dedicated to enhancing mental health and wellness of Georgians through education, outreach and advocacy. We envision that Georgians will have access to mental wellness resources and thrive in compassionate communities.**

---

### FIND HELP NEAR YOU

**Georgia Crisis & Access Line**

1-800-715-4225
mygcal.com

2250 N Druid Hills Rd NE Ste 275
Atlanta, GA 30329
Phone: (770) 741-1481

---

**SOURCES**