

Signs and Symptoms of Depression

“I felt that I was at the end of my road.”

“You feel it in your body. Your mind is just flooded with negativity.”

“Sometimes it’s not even really feeling anything at all. It’s just an absence of feeling.”

Depression is a serious mental health condition that affects about 16 million American adults. People with depression suffer from emotional changes that can make it a challenge to perform day-to-day activities or feel happy. It also raises the risk of serious disease or unhealthy behaviors, so recognizing depression and getting it diagnosed is the first step to getting your life back on track.

“The symptoms have to last for two weeks or more. It’s not just feeling down for a couple days, once a month or couple days. It’s more of a persistent, two weeks at least, of feeling down consistently having those symptoms”

Symptoms of depression can include: feelings of sadness, worthlessness and helplessness, loss of interest, very low energy, low motivation, difficulty concentrating, trouble remembering or making decisions, trouble sleeping, and thoughts of death. It’s important to pay attention to your mind and body. Someone with major depression may have trouble doing daily activities and may even feel as if life isn’t worth living.

“You can’t work, you can’t do school, or you’re not functioning even if you don’t have suicidal thoughts, you should be getting treatment.”

Depression is not the same as just being sad.

“When I’m sad, I can still make decisions. When I’m depressed, I stop myself from making a lot of decisions because I don’t trust my perception of things.”

Sarah Reed has suffered from depression along with an anxiety disorder since she was a teenager. It’s not uncommon for someone with one mental health issue to also be diagnosed with another. Eventually Sarah found the right medications to help her cope with both. But even with treatment, her depression sometimes rears its ugly head.

“I am overcome with feelings of hopelessness, despair. If I had my way and I didn’t have responsibilities, I would stay in bed all day.”

Sarah now works as a mental health therapist, using her personal experience to help others.

“When a person with depression such as myself hears things like ‘make lemons out of lemonade, what do you have to so upset over’ it’s so minimalizing.”

Recognizing the symptoms of depression is the first step, and that means paying attention to changes in how you can handle normal, day-to-day tasks. Alex Langosch knows this firsthand. As a busy college student, it’s easy for him to tell when he’s having a depressive episode.

“I had to force myself out of bed or sometimes I’ll have to push myself to do something that I might not want to do.”

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Alex has also found the right combination of medication and therapy to manage his depression. But he finds changes in his mood can still happen unexpectedly.

“The feelings do come and go. Sometimes It’ll be like mood swings throughout the day where I’ll be happy one moment and then just down the next.”

Claudine Jackson volunteers at a social club for people who have mental illness. Claudine suffers from depression, anxiety and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder from a childhood trauma. Her symptoms got worse as she got older.

“I was losing a lot of sleep and I was falling into a deep depression. I was isolating.”

Claudine found that therapy, medication and supportive friends made all the difference for her.

“I had no life, you know, because I felt, you know, I mean I’m depressed, and I don’t want to go around people, and I don’t want to do anything. But now I have the most amazing life ever.”

If you are experiencing a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest and changes in your ability to complete everyday activities, talk to a mental health professional. They can determine if you have major depression and help you find an effective treatment plan to manage it.

“There will be days where you may not feel great and you just kind of have to get over those days and it does get better.”