

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING DEPRESSION

This tip sheet is for educational purposes. Always consult your healthcare provider about your specific situation.

What is Depression?

Depression is a common but serious medical condition that affects how you feel, think, and handle daily activities. It's more than just sadness—and it's treatable.

Common Signs

- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- Loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Changes in sleep, appetite, or energy
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Crisis? Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) or go to your nearest emergency room.

Daily Coping Strategies

Establish Routine: Set regular sleep times, plan daily activities, break tasks into small steps

Stay Connected: Reach out to friends/family, join support groups, share your feelings with trusted people

Move Your Body: Aim for 20-30 minutes of activity daily—even a short walk helps

Practice Self-Care: Eat regular meals, limit alcohol, get natural light, engage in activities (even if they don't feel enjoyable yet)

Challenge Negative Thoughts: Notice self-criticism, practice self-compassion—depression is not your fault

Treatment Works

- Common effective treatments include:
- Psychotherapy (talk therapy like CBT)
- Medication (antidepressants)
- Combination (therapy + medication often works best)
- Lifestyle changes (exercise, sleep, nutrition)

When to Reach Out

Contact your provider if symptoms worsen, you're having thoughts of self-harm, medication isn't working, or you're struggling with daily functioning.

Remember

- Recovery takes time—be patient with yourself
- Small steps forward are still progress
- Setbacks are normal
- You deserve support
- Many people recover fully

Resources

- **Crisis:** 988 or text HOME to 741741 • **Emergency:** 911 • **Support:** Contact your therapist, psychiatrist, or behavioral health clinic