

Mental Health Awareness

Mental health and mental illness

What is mental health?

This is when you:

- Feel good about yourself
- Feel good with other people
- Feel good about life

What is mental illness?

This is when you:

- Worry a lot
- Feel sad
- Change how you feel a lot
- Don't feel good



Kinds of mental illness

Depression: This means feeling sad for a long time. You may not want to do anything. You may not sleep well. You may not eat well.

Bipolar disorder: This means feeling good and then feeling really sad. When you feel good, you may not sleep a lot.

Schizophrenia: You may see things that aren't there. You may not be able to think. You may feel bad. You may want to be alone. You may need to see a doctor if you feel this way. The doctor will tell you what is wrong.

Anxiety disorders: You may feel scared. You may feel sick, sweat and this can happen really fast.

Post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD): Something bad happened to trigger this. You think about what happened a lot.

Personality disorders: This means that you can't act like most people do. You may not be able to talk to other people. You may want to be alone.

If you feel you are experiencing any of these illnesses, please visit your doctor.

Highlighting Depression

Depression is more than the blues. It's a serious illness that affects more than 11 million adult Americans each year. Despite its prevalence, depression frequently goes untreated. People tend to ignore its symptoms or attribute them to personal weakness. The everyday blues are a natural reaction to life's ups and downs. Major depression, however, causes changes in a person's mood, behavior and feelings. An untreated episode can last as long as a year and will probably happen again during a person's life-time.

Symptoms of Depression

When a doctor examines a person for depression they look for nine symptoms. A diagnosis is made when a person has experienced five or more of the symptoms for more than two weeks or cannot function normally. Symptoms include:

- Feelings of sadness or irritability
- Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed, including sex
- Changes in weight or appetite
- Changes in sleeping patterns
- Feeling guilty hopeless or worthless
- Inability to concentrate, remember things, or make decisions
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Restlessness or decreased activity noticed by others
- Thought of suicide or death

Depression affects a person of all ages, races and cultures. People between the ages of 24-44 are most likely to develop depression, however it also can affect children and the elderly. In fact, teenagers and the elderly are very high-risk groups for depression and the elderly have the highest rate of suicide of any group.

Treating Depression

If you think you might have depression or any other mental illness, make an appointment to see your doctor.

Mental Health Association
of Wisconsin

Bringing Wellness Home

