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MENTAL WELLNESS

Recognizing the Signs of Depression

with Kier Bison, PhD, ABPP, RP, Enterhealth Rehabilitation Neuropsychologist

What is Depression?

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What Depression Is

- Common and serious mental health issue
- Persistent sadness, despair, anger, frustration or negative self-talk
- Adversely affects thoughts, feelings and behaviors
- Interferes with personal relationships, work performance, social interactions, physical health, outlook on life and more

What Depression Is Not

- Feeling sad, low or blue sometimes
- Experiencing grief or heartbreak



What Role Does the Brain Play in Depression?

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- The goal of treating depression is to improve the brain's ability to regulate mood
- With individuals who are depressed, this process is disrupted due to changes in neurotransmitters, or chemicals that relay messages throughout the brain
- Neurotransmitters involved in depression:
 - Serotonin – helps regulate sleep, appetite and mood, inhibits pain
 - Norepinephrine – helps determine motivation and reward feelings
 - Dopamine – helps with movement, perception of reality, motivation and reward

What Causes Depression?

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Traumatic experiences: Childhood events, auto accidents, global pandemics

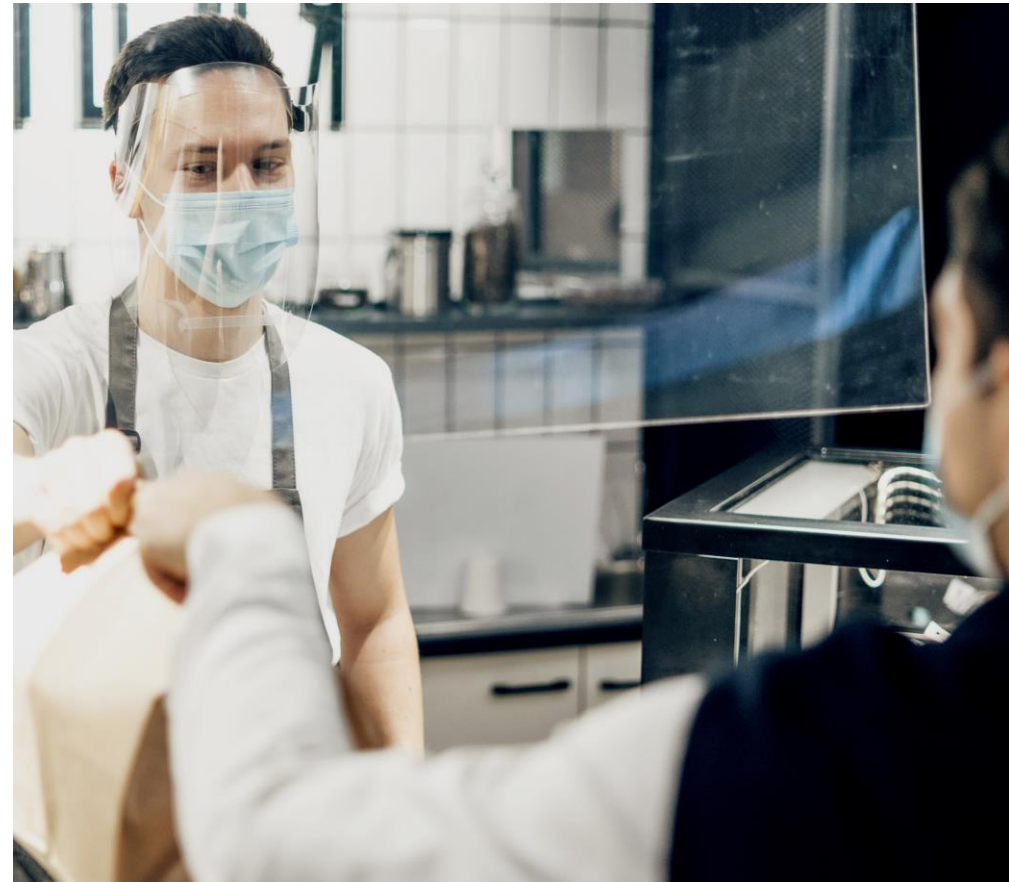
Life changes: Marital status, moving, financial standing, retirement, switching jobs

Medical conditions: Sleep disturbances, long-term illness, chronic pain, medications

Lifestyle factors: Overworking, having poor diet, exercise and sleep, being isolated

Major stress or loss: Losing a loved one or job, completing a significant work project

Genetics and environment: Family history of depression, being around depressed people



What Does Depression Look Like?

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- Loss of interest in activities
- Feeling sadness or despair
- Experiencing anger or frustration
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Changes in appetite or weight loss or gain
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Guilty or worthlessness thoughts
- Low mood, affect or self esteem
- Suicidal thoughts or behaviors

Can Someone Be High Functioning and Depressed?

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Definition

- Experiencing occupational, educational or social impairments due to low mood but functioning well in some areas

Examples

- You get to work on time and do your job well, but you do not feel like being with people and rarely engage socially
- You are a stay-at-home parent managing household duties, but you feel lonely without social connection during the day
- You have a vibrant social life in evenings and on weekends, but you struggle to complete tasks throughout the workday



How Can Symptoms of Depression Be Managed?

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- Be aware of changes in mood and behavior
- Practice daily routine and good hygiene
- Focus on good diet, exercise and sleep
- Engage in pleasurable hobbies or activities
- Monitor internal dialogue for negativity
- Spend time outdoors getting natural light
- Stay engaged with family and friends
- Look for small wins throughout the day
- Set realistic expectations for daily tasks
- Use gratitude to help change thinking

How Can Someone Talk About Being Depressed?

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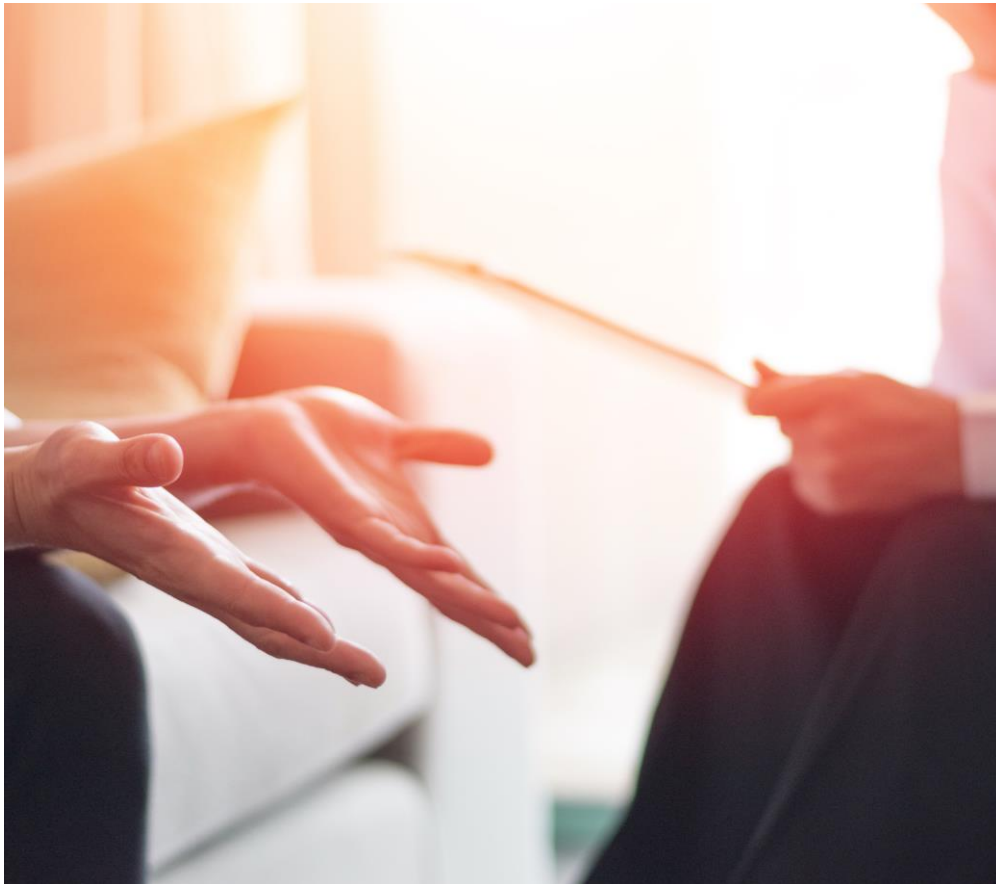
- Take time to get in the right frame of mind
- Think about who you want to tell
- Seek out a professional if necessary
- Think about what you want to say
- Write down your thoughts in advance
- Pick a good moment for you and them
- Combine conversation with activity
- Stick to your pre-written notes
- Practice self-compassion with the process



When and How Should Someone Seek Help for Depression?

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When

- Noticeable, negative changes happening at work, home and social settings
- Recommended strategies are not enough to manage it long term

How

- Call us for guidance at 1-844-261-4855
- Talk about treatment options with your primary care provider
- Make a specialist appointment with a psychologist or psychiatrist
- Be open to different solutions such as medications and therapies
- Know effective treatment is available and may only be necessary in the short term

What Happens When Depression Goes Untreated?

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- Physical health issues and illnesses
- Work performance problems
- Cognitive trouble and decline
- Interpersonal relationship trouble
- Loneliness and social isolation
- Fear and phobia development
- Sleep problems and insomnia
- Substance abuse and addiction
- Mental health issues and disorders
- Suicidal thoughts and behaviors



What Signs of Suicide Risk Should Someone Watch For?

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- Typical symptoms of depression
- Dangerous or destructive behaviors
- Significant mood swings
- Withdrawal from social situations
- Changes in personality or appearance
- Believing there is no reason to live
- Sensing being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Putting personal business in order
- Talking about suicide or death openly

What Should Someone Do for Suicide Risk?

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- Do not be afraid to ask if they are depressed or thinking about suicide
- Determine if they are seeking professional help through therapy and medication
- Offer encouragement by letting them know depression is temporary and treatable
- Let them know you care about them and want the chance to talk about their feelings
- Make sure they are not left alone and ask for help from family members and friends
- Restrict or remove access to anything they might use to hurt themselves
- Call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 800-273-8255 if crisis occurs



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Questions and Answers

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