



DEPRESSION

Depression vs. “The Blues”

Everyone experiences times in their life when they feel down. It is perfectly normal to react with sadness to events in our lives, such as a break up, moving away from family and friends, or the loss of someone we care about. The added stress of medical school also affects our mood. However, these feelings of sadness usually pass and we are still able to experience feelings of happiness. Sometimes this feeling of being down and depressed does not go away. If you are have stopped enjoying things you used to, are having difficulty concentrating, can't seem to get out of bed, or have a persistent feeling of sadness you just can't shake, you may be depressed.

Symptoms of Depression

Depression can affect you in many ways. It can affect how you feel and perceive things, your behaviors and attitudes, and how you feel physically. Here are some common symptoms of depression:

Feelings/Perceptions:

- Feeling miserable more often than not
- Inability to find pleasure in things
- Irritability
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or worthlessness
- Exaggerated sense of guilt or self-blame
- Loss of sexual desire
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Behaviors/Attitudes

- Lack of interest in things that you used to enjoy
- Withdrawing from those around you
- Neglecting responsibilities and/or appearance
- Unable to “take things in stride” as well as you used to
- Dissatisfaction about life in general
- Difficulty concentrating and remembering things; difficulty making decisions
- Not able to cope with things like you used to

Physical Complaints

- Feeling tired all the time
- Loss of energy
- Changes in appetite (no appetite or overeating)
- Weight changes without changes in diet
- Trouble sleeping (waking up too early, waking up in the middle of the night, difficulty falling asleep, sleeping too much)
- Unexplained physical complaints (headache, back ache)

Causes of Depression

Sometimes depression is triggered by a stressor that we can recognize, such as relocating or losing someone you love. Other times ongoing stressors tax our ability to cope and leads to depression. Other times, we cannot identify a “cause.” Research has found that there is a strong genetic component to depression. Regardless of the cause, if you are depressed you should seek help.

Getting Help for Depression

Depression is very much a treatable thing. Often, symptoms can be relieved quickly through counseling, medications, or a combination of both. Asking for help is the first step.

What if it's the Blues?

You can still benefit from counseling. Sometimes just talking to someone can be helpful. Also, a counselor can help you to identify coping strategies and stress management techniques that can help you get over “the hump.” There are other things you can do on your own to help feel better. Talk with someone in your support network, push yourself to go do something you enjoy, give yourself time to be stress free (without school or other stressors present), do something nice for yourself. .. all of these things can be helpful.

**For help call the Counseling Center at 407-823-2811
to schedule an appointment**