

## Identification Guide for Depression

### What is Depression?

Clinical depression is a serious disorder that is very different from "feeling down." Temporary feelings of sadness are a normal part of life but in clinical depression, such feelings are out of proportion to any external causes. People who are not clinically depressed can cope with sadness without becoming incapacitated or overwhelmed.

Sadness may not always be the major symptom of a depressed person. Depression may be felt as a numb or empty feeling, or a lack of feelings altogether. A depressed individual may not be able to feel pleasure about anything. Depression is a serious illness in which a person experiences a marked change in their mood and in the way they view themselves and the world. Depression can vary in severity and duration; it can also be life-threatening.

### Bipolar Depression vs. Major Depression

Bipolar depression is not nearly as prevalent as other forms of clinical depression. Bipolar depression is the manic depressive phase of bipolar disorder and involves cycles of depression and elation or mania. Most of the time, bipolar mood swings are gradual, but sometimes the mood changes can occur quickly.

When in the depressed phase, a person with bipolar disorder can reflect the same symptoms of a depressive disorder, but these symptoms may then give way to a manic phase, which is identified with surges of great energy and euphoria--symptoms that are not present in major depression.



**Disclaimer** - This assessment is not intended to diagnose or treat any medical or emotional condition. It is advised that you consult a physician with any concerns regarding this questionnaire.

### Identification Questions for Depressive Disorders

Have you had a depressed mood most or all of the day, most every day, or would others say you are depressed?

Do you no longer enjoy activities you once enjoyed?

Have you experienced fluctuations in your weight?

Do you sleep too much or too little?

Do you feel slow, or lacking in energy?

Do you have recurring thoughts of death or suicide?

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*If you answered yes to any of the questions above, please consult a mental health professional for a comprehensive evaluation. If you or someone you know is experiencing thoughts of death or suicide, seek help immediately by calling the toll free number at the bottom of the page.*

### Common Signs & Symptoms of Depression

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that you once enjoyed, including sex
- Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping.
- Appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"
- Thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts
- Restlessness, irritability
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain

**Call us. We can help!**

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