

“ Life is a journey where we can choose to discover and practice the personal tools that can build a foundation from which we can live the best of life has to offer. ”

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# Managing Depression

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, more than 19 million adults in the United States are affected by depression. In recent years, clinical depression has increased in frequency among children and adolescents. Experiencing Depression for short periods of times is a normal part of life.

Indications of depression include feelings of sadness, tearfulness, irritability, changes in appetite and/or sleep patterns, decreased interest in hobbies, work, or school and decreased energy. Increased physical complaints, especially in children and older persons, can also be a sign of depression. These changes in mood, behavior and activity may result in significant disruption to an individual's daily living.

## Helpful Strategies:

Take time for yourself every day. Increased stress is one cause of depression. Scheduling as little as five minutes per day can help reduce stress. Relax breathe deeply, read uplifting books, or listen to music you enjoy.

Exercise regularly. Brisk walking or opting to take the stairs can often be readily incorporated into your already busy schedule.

Avoid alcohol and drugs. Many substances, including some over-the-counter medications, which people use in an effort to "forget" about problems or get to sleep, actually result in increased irritability and getting less restful sleep.

Maintain a routine. Try to eat, sleep, and wake at about the same time each day.

Spend time with people who are upbeat and

Spend time outdoors. A change in environment along with sunshine can help you relax and regroup. If you are stressed but cannot get outside, try looking out the window and taking a few deep breaths.

Learn your early warning signs of depression. Since a change in mood can be quite gradual for many people, early intervention can prevent a full depressive episode. Make note of what changes occur for you first when you are under stress. When stress is high and these early changes occur, take action for self-care without delay.

Seek professional help. Research has shown that a combination of counseling and medication is most effective for most people in the treatment of depression. If you, or a loved one, are experiencing depression, an evaluation with a mental health professional can be helpful in determining the best course of

positive. Optimism is contagious.

Go out with friends. See a funny movie, play putt-putt golf, or pick some other activity you haven't done in a while but have always enjoyed.

treatment for you