

What Should I Know about Depression?

Information about Depression

- Up to 25% of all Americans experience an episode of clinical depression during their lifetimes.
- 10% of college students are diagnosed with depression.
- Depression is **treatable**.
- Majority of depressed young adults don't receive treatment.
- Untreated depression is the **#1 cause of suicide**.

Symptoms of Depression

- Feeling down, blue, constant sadness; tearfulness.
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt.
- Chronic worry, excessive fear.
- Hopelessness; pessimistic outlook.
- Increased irritability (especially in adolescents).
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Difficulty falling asleep.
- Chronic fatigue, sluggishness.
- Slowed or hesitant speech or body movements, or restlessness (anxiety).
- Low energy and motivation.
- Change in appetite, noticeable weight loss or weight gain, or abnormal eating patterns.
- Loss of interest in activities which once brought joy.
- Withdrawal from family and friends (isolation).
- Poor school performance.
- Extreme personality changes.
- Preoccupation with death themes in literature, music, drawings, speaking of death repeatedly, fascination with guns/knives.
- Drug or alcohol use or abuse.
- Suicidal thoughts, plans, or attempts.

Is My Friend or Loved One Depressed or Having Thoughts of Suicide?

Not all people with depression will show all symptoms or have them to the same degree. If a person has four or more symptoms, for more than two weeks, consult a medical doctor or psychiatrist. While the symptoms specified for all groups above generally characterize major depression, there are other disorders with similar characteristics including: unipolar depression, bipolar illness, schizophrenia, anxiety disorder, or attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity. Remember that only a medical doctor can diagnose depression.

Warning Signs of Suicide

1. Various symptoms of depression as cited above.
2. Talking about suicide.
3. Statements about hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness.
4. Preoccupation with death.
5. Hallucinations or unusual beliefs.
6. Extreme anxiety or panic.
7. Suddenly calmer.
8. Loss of interest in things one cares about.
9. Visiting or calling people one cares about.
10. Making arrangements; setting one's affairs in order.
11. Giving things away.

Statistics on Depression and Suicide

- At any one time, as many as five percent of the population suffers from severe depression and ten to fifteen percent will experience severe depression at some time in their lives.
- More Americans suffer from depression than coronary heart disease (7 million), cancer (6 million) and AIDS (200,000) combined.
- More people die from suicide than from homicide.
- .01 per of people die by suicide (about one in a thousand).
- For young people 15-24 years old, suicide is the third leading cause of death.
- Suicide is the second most common mode of death among college students.
- About two thirds of depressed people think about suicide and between 10 and 15 percent of those being treated for major depression [severe enough to be hospitalized] eventually complete suicide.
- 2.5 female attempts for each male attempt. Men succeed 4 times as often as women.
- Nearly 2 out of 3 people with depression do not receive the treatment they need.
- 80% of people that seek treatment for depression are treated successfully.

Suicide Prevention – Emergency Numbers and Suggested Sites

- 911.
- 211. (Note: Many areas of the country have 211 numbers, which are help information lines, particularly for mental health issues. However, not all cities and counties have 211 numbers. Therefore the reader is encouraged to try the number before suggesting it to a parishioner.)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: 1-888-333-2377
- National Mental Health Association: 1-800-969-6642
- 1-800-273-TALK
- 1-800-SUICIDE
- Suicide Awareness Voices of Education: www.save.org
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): www.nami.org
- Military Outreach USA: www.militaryoutreachusa.org