

Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

May 2016

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Depression: Supporting a Family Member or Friend



Helping someone with depression can be a challenge. If someone in your life has depression, you may feel helpless and wonder what to do. Learn how to offer support and understanding and how to help your loved one get the resources to cope with depression. Here's what you can do.

Learn the Symptoms of Depression

Depression signs and symptoms vary from person to person. They can include:

- Feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness or hopelessness
- Angry outbursts, irritability or frustration, even over small matters
- Loss of interest or pleasure in most or all normal activities, such as sex, hobbies or sports
- Insomnia or sleeping too much
- Tiredness and lack of energy, so even small tasks take extra effort
- Changes in appetite—reduced appetite and weight loss or increased cravings for food and weight gain
- Anxiety, agitation or restlessness
- Slowed thinking, speaking or body movements
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt, fixating on past failures or blaming yourself for things that aren't your responsibility
- Trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions and remembering things
- Frequent or recurrent mention of death, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts or suicide
- Unexplained physical problems, such as back pain or headaches

For many people with depression, symptoms usually are severe enough to cause noticeable problems in day-to-day activities, such as work, school, social activities or relationships with others. Other people may feel generally miserable or unhappy without knowing why. Children and teens may show depression by being irritable or cranky rather than sad.

Online Seminar Reminder

Beating the Blues

When

Available on-demand
beginning May 17, 2016

Where

www.deeroakseap.com



Depression: Supporting a Family Member or Friend *(continued)*



Encourage Treatment

People with depression may not recognize or acknowledge that they're depressed. They may not be aware of signs and symptoms of depression, so they may think their feelings are normal.

All too often, people feel ashamed about their depression and mistakenly believe they should be able to overcome it with willpower alone. But depression seldom gets better without treatment and may get worse. With the right treatment approach, the person you care about can get better.

How You Can Help

- Talk to the person about what you've noticed and why you're concerned.
- Explain that depression is a medical condition, not a personal flaw or weakness — and that it usually gets better with treatment.
- Suggest seeking help from a professional — a medical doctor or a mental health provider, such as a licensed counselor or psychologist.
- Offer to help prepare a list of questions to discuss in an initial appointment with a doctor or mental health provider.
- Express your willingness to help by setting up appointments, going along to them and attending family therapy sessions.
- If your loved one's illness is severe or potentially life-threatening, contact a doctor, a hospital or emergency medical services.

Identify Warning Signs of Worsening Depression

Everyone experiences depression differently. Observe your loved one. Learn how depression affects your family member or friend—and what to do when it gets worse.

Consider these issues:

- What are the typical signs and symptoms of depression in your relative or friend?
- What behaviors or language do you observe when his or her depression is worse?
- What behaviors or language do you observe when he or she is doing well?
- What circumstances trigger episodes of more severe depression?
- What activities are most helpful when he or she is depressed?

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Be Good to Yourself: Tips for Adults



Many people feel stress in their daily lives. Stress can cause you to overeat, feel tired, and not want to do anything. Regular physical activity can give you more energy.

Try some of these other ideas to help relieve stress and stay on track with your fitness and nutrition goals:

- Get plenty of sleep.
- Practice deep breathing while relaxing your muscles one at a time.
- Take a break and go for a walk.
- Take short stretch breaks throughout the day.
- Try taking a yoga or tai chi class to energize yourself and reduce stress.
- Try a new hobby, like a pottery class or any activity that sparks your interest.
- Surround yourself with people whose company you enjoy.
- A balanced eating plan, regular physical activity, and stress relief can help you stay healthy for life.
- Eat breakfast every day. People who eat breakfast are less likely to overeat later in the day.
- Choose whole grains more often. Try whole wheat breads and pastas, oatmeal, brown rice or bulgur.
- Select a mix of colorful vegetables each day. Vegetables of different colors provide different nutrients.
- Have low-fat, low-sugar snacks on hand at home, at work, or on-the-go to combat hunger and prevent overeating.
- At restaurants, eat only half your meal and take the rest home.
- Visit museums, the zoo or an aquarium. You and your family can walk for hours and not realize it.
- Take a walk after dinner instead of watching TV.

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I scream

Vanilla is the most popular ice cream flavor, premium ice cream is the best-selling type of ice cream, and frozen yogurt is resurging in popularity among Americans, according to a survey by the International Ice Cream Association.

Health-e headlines™

Yes, Stretch

Using the wrong technique during stretching can waste your time and increase your risk of injury. To stretch safely, you must follow the 4 main principles: avoiding pain, stretching slowly, stretching the right muscle, and working only the necessary joints and muscles.

Health-e headlines™

An EAP Reminder

Life can be hectic. The EAP can help you find your balance.

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members.

If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.





Clinician's Corner

Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team



We can always count on the normal highs and lows of life

to bring us periods of feeling happy and grateful, and inevitably, periods in which we feel sad, lost, or stuck. As our circumstances change, most of us move quickly through the ebb and flow of these emotions.

Depression is not the same as grief following a loss in your life. It also goes beyond a brief period of feeling sad or exceptionally stressed. Depression is defined by a significant period of time, usually at least two weeks, with marked changes in your mood, activity, and behavior. While depression is usually thought of as sadness and feeling weepy, it can manifest as excessive irritability or even feeling numb or empty. Sleeping and eating patterns often change during periods of depression. People also begin to withdraw from friends and activities that no longer seem to bring them joy or happiness.

Depression can change the way that you view yourself, the world, and others. Specifically, people who suffer from depression tend to expect the worst, believe that they are flawed, feel excessively guilty, unlovable or that they have no purpose, feel that they cannot be understood, and often imagine that it is not possible to feel better. When people start to develop these thinking patterns, it can also lead to excessive feelings of guilt and shame ("I am weak," or "I should be able to get through this.")

While millions of Americans suffer from depression on a yearly basis, so often treatment is avoided due to shame, stigma, or a belief that their sadness will "just go away on its own." The irony is that a disease that causes people to feel isolated and alone is shared by so many. There are a number of treatments that have been shown to improve depression to include medication, therapy, and making lifestyle changes to maximize good moods. If you have been concerned about depression that you or a family member may be experiencing, our counselors are available 24/7 to help start the process. Or, read more about depression on our website.

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Deer Oaks EAP Services, LLC



Establish Personal Financial Priorities

When you are recovering from a personal setback, you'll likely find yourself having to establish financial priorities so that you'll know where to focus your effort and resources. Not all of your household debts will equally impact your family. Your first payment priorities should be all bills associated with your essential needs, including utilities, food, mortgage or rent, and insurance. While you can most likely find ways to save on all of these bills, by cutting back and negotiating lower rates, paying them is extremely important.

If you become unemployed, you may have the right to extend your medical coverage through the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). Under COBRA, your insurance payments will likely be significantly higher than they were when you were employed, but they will be lower than similar coverage obtained on your own. Having appropriate health insurance coverage is essential because a medical emergency could devastate your finances.

The government also offers programs, such as Medicaid, for people with low incomes. Also, check with your local state government about health insurance programs.

The following is an example of how you might prioritize your financial obligations:

- First priority debts likely include your rent or mortgage, tax liabilities, insurance premiums, auto loans, and utilities.
- Second priority debts may include other secured loans through financial institutions, such as a car loan.
- Third priority lenders may include retailers, hospitals, doctors, credit card issuers and other unsecured creditors.

Remember, each person will have his or her own unique list of priorities. Realize that just because a category of debt is listed as a third priority, does not mean it isn't important. It simply means you need to contact and make payments to the higher priority creditors first. For help determining your financial priorities, you can use a simple Financial Priorities Worksheet.

After you decide what your priorities are, review your budget and determine which bills you are unable to fully pay. Then, contact your creditors to discuss your situation. Explain that you want to pay your bills but due to your setback, are unable to. In some situations, you may be able to get a new payment plan.

About Money Management International

Money Management International (MMI) is a nonprofit, full-service credit-counseling agency, providing confidential financial guidance, financial education, counseling and debt management assistance to consumers since 1958. MMI helps consumers trim their expenses, develop a spending plan and repay debts. Counseling is available by appointment in branch offices and 24/7 by telephone and Internet. Services are available in English or Spanish. To learn more, call 800.432.7310 or visit www.MoneyManagement.org.