

Think you know about mental illness?



Depression

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health is working to change the way you think about mental illness. Our goal is to eliminate misconceptions about and to promote a better understanding of mental health. It's time for us to change the way we think about mental illness. It's time to think again.

What is depression?

Everyone feels sad or gets down sometimes, but those feelings usually pass with time. That is not what depression is. Depression is a common but serious mood disorder. It causes distressing symptoms that affects the ways people handle their daily activities, such as working, eating, or sleeping. Major depression can last for weeks at a time, and a persistent depressive disorder can last for years. Depression is not the same as a passing sadness, and it cannot be willed or wished away. It is not a sign of personal weakness. People with a depressive illness cannot merely "pull themselves together" and get better.

What causes depression?

Depression is one of the most common mental health issues in the United States, and it is believed to result from a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors. Though depression can affect people of any age, it often begins in adulthood, and can occur alongside other serious medical illnesses. Other risk factors include a family history of depression, major life changes, trauma, or stress.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Depression can look differently in different people. Women often have depression more than men, and their symptoms often include feelings of sadness, worthlessness, and guilt. Men are more likely to be tired, irritable, or angry. They may lose interest in work or activities they previously enjoyed or have sleep problems. Teenagers with depression may get in trouble at school, sulk or be irritable, or display anxiety. General signs and symptoms include:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed

What treatment is available?

Help is always available. Both medication and therapy can be helpful in treating depression. For more information, or if you need immediate help, call the Department of Mental Health help line at 1-877-210-8513.



All information obtained from the National Institute of Mental Health at www.nimh.nih.gov.

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