

LIFE WITH DEPRESSION

PEOPLE WITH DEPRESSION SAY IT FEELS LIKE:

You are a burden to everyone

Fighting an exhausting battle against yourself

A needle of pain pricking at your body at every chance it gets

You want your life to get better, but everything is so hard to do and you have no motivation

A dark, empty room with no escape

Your head is surrounded by a thick, black, unrelenting fog

You need to hug someone. But at the same time, you don't want any human to hug you

All you want is to go home and just curl up and fall asleep forever

It's hard to be happy, to love or accept love

Exhausting, like you're living in a cage

You have a lump in your throat, as if you're about to cry at any moment, all day

Being misunderstood and ashamed

Drowning and no one sees it and you feel helpless against the water around you

You'll never be happy again, even when you know that's not true

Hopeless. Like there is no person or thing that can help you forget about everything that makes you sad all of the time

An overwhelming sense of sadness about life and about all that you are and all you do

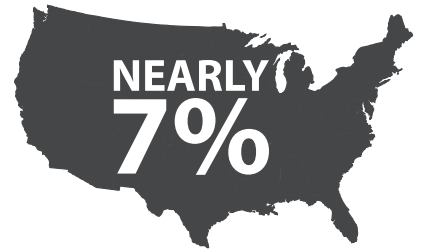
Difficult to tell if you can trust your own perception of reality

Soul sucking torture

You are numb to the world

Really terribly lonely all of the time

Heavy and tired, like you're moving through quicksand



OF AMERICAN ADULTS HAD A MAJOR DEPRESSIVE EPISODE IN 2014.¹ THAT IS 15.7 MILLION PEOPLE.



ENOUGH TO FILL EVERY MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL AND FOOTBALL STADIUM IN THE UNITED STATES



#mentalillnessfeelslike



Share what life with a depressive disorder feels like for you in words, images or video by tagging your social media posts with [#mentalillnessfeelslike](https://www.instagram.com/mentalillnessfeelslike).

Posts will be displayed at [mentalhealthamerica.net/feelslike](https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/feelslike) where you can also submit anonymously if you choose.

- Speak up about your own experiences
- Help others who may be struggling to explain what they are going through to figure out if they are showing signs of a mental illness
- Break down the discrimination and stigma surrounding mental illnesses
- Show others that they are not alone in their feelings and their symptoms

DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS ARE REAL ILLNESSES THAT INVOLVE EXTENDED PERIODS OF FEELING EXTREMELY LOW AND DISRUPT A PERSON'S ABILITY TO ENJOY LIFE. THEY AFFECT:



THE BODY

Causing: headaches, changes in appetite which cause either weight gain or loss, constantly feeling tired, body aches and pains, a weakened immune system, and sleeping too much or not enough.



THOUGHTS

Causing people to feel: inadequate (like they aren't good enough), extremely sad, guilty, irritable, lonely, empty, pessimistic (having a negative outlook), preoccupied with death or suicide, unable to focus, or unmotivated.



BEHAVIORS

Causing: withdrawal from social activities, decreased interest in sex, slowed speech, difficulty finishing (or even starting) tasks, or not keeping up with daily responsibilities.

HAVING A DEPRESSIVE DISORDER IS NOT:

- Being sad about a bad situation
- Grieving the loss of a loved one
- All in a person's head
- Overreacting or being overly emotional
- Something that everybody experiences
- Something that a person just "gets over"
- A pity party
- Being stuck in a rut
- Laziness
- A choice
- A sign of weakness
- A character flaw

TIPS FOR TACKLING DEPRESSION



Figure out what lifts your spirits and make a list you can refer to when you start to feel down. Some things you might include: funny websites, movies that make you laugh, looking at pictures of good times, playing with a pet, taking a bath, hiking, puzzles, phone numbers of people you like talking to or places you like to go.



Get moving to get your body's feel-good chemicals flowing. Take a brisk walk, go up and down the stairs, or do some jumping jacks. Aim for 30 minutes daily - you can break it up into three, 10-minute sessions to make it easier.



Remind yourself that everything does not suck by keeping a journal. Take some time each night to write down three things that you're grateful for, three things you achieved during the day, and/or three good things that happened.



Make an appointment with a therapist. It might take a while to get an appointment, but once you have that relationship it will be easier to set up appointments in the future. Taking that first step can make you feel like you've made progress, give you a sense of control over your condition, and hope for the future.



If your to-do list seems daunting, take a few moments to determine how much time it actually takes to complete each task. For instance, folding laundry may seem like a real pain, but only takes about 10 minutes. Rather than allowing it to sit and become a big, intimidating laundry pile, you'll feel a sense of accomplishment in getting it done. Start with quick tasks and build up momentum to taking care of the more time-consuming ones.



Call someone you trust and ask them to talk to you or even just sit with you. Having a non-judging person present can help you open up, or at least feel less alone. If you can't get in touch with a friend or family member, go to www.warmlines.org to find someone to talk to in your state.



Challenge your negative thoughts about yourself. Being depressed may make you feel like something you've done was horrible, or that you're ugly, or that you don't deserve good things to happen. But if a loved one told you they were feeling that way—what would you say to them?

FIND HELP NEAR YOU

Locate an MHA Affiliate in your area by visiting mentalhealthamerica.net/find-affiliate

Find treatment providers using SAMHSA's Treatment Locator at findtreatment.samhsa.gov

- /mentalhealthamerica
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- www.mentalhealthamerica.net

SOME OF THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS INCLUDE:

Major Depressive Disorder, Persistent Depressive Disorder (Dysthymia), Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder, Seasonal Affective Disorder, and Post-Partum Depression.

Depression is also a feature of Bipolar Disorder.

To learn more visit:
mentalhealthamerica.net/depression

SCREENING CAN HELP CATCH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS EARLY—B4STAGE4.

If you think you may be showing signs of a depressive disorder, take a screen at mhascreening.org.

A screening is not a diagnosis, but it can be a helpful tool for starting a conversation with your doctor or a loved one about your mental health.



www.mhascreening.org
Anonymous • Free • Confidential

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255), go to your local Emergency Room or call 911.



SOURCES
1 Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2015). Behavioral health trends in the United States: Results from the 2014 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. SMA 15-4927, NSDUH Series H-50). Retrieved from <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/>
2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_current_National_Football_League_stadiums
3 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Major_League_Baseball_stadiums