

DEPRESSION



Black Mental
Wellness

The Mecca of Black Wellness



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Take a few moments to think about the last 2 weeks before answering the following questions.

- Have you felt sadder and tired most days?
- Has your sleep been all over the place? For example, some days you may be sleeping too much, and other days you may not be getting enough sleep.
- Has your back, stomach or head been hurting more than usual?
- Have you just not felt like yourself recently, or the things that you used to enjoy, are no longer pleasurable?

If you answered **yes** to most of the questions above, then there is a chance that you may be experiencing depression.

Depression is one of the most common mental health disorders among individuals in the United States of America ⁽¹⁾.

Black/African American adults are more likely to report psychological distress, and feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and worthlessness, when compared to White/European American adults ⁽²⁾. Despite the overwhelming presence of depression, Black/African Americans, are also less likely to receive mental health treatment ⁽³⁾.

Each individual experience depression differently. Review the list of common symptoms of depression and think about yourself. If you think that you may be experiencing depression, review the treatment options below.

Common Symptoms of Depression:

- Feeling sad or down
- Increased physical bodily symptoms (pain, headaches, or stomach aches)
- Feeling irritable or arguing with others frequently
- Loss of interest in things you previously enjoyed (getting your hair or nails done, getting a haircut, playing sports)
- Eating more or less, or losing weight, without trying
- Changes in your sleep patterns (sleeping less or more than usual)
- Other people say you are moving slower or faster than usual (pacing back and forth or tapping your foot)
- Feeling tired or struggling to get going
- Feeling bad about yourself or blaming yourself for things that happened
- Difficulty focusing or making decisions
- Thoughts of hurting yourself

(1). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health. (2015). Depression (NIH Publication No. 15-3561). Bethesda, MD: U.S. Government Printing Office.

(2) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Mental Health. (2016). Mental health and African Americans. Retrieved from <http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=4&lvlid=24>

(3) Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (2013). National healthcare disparities report. Retrieved from <http://www.ahrq.gov/research/findings/nhqrdr/nhdr13/chap2-txt.html#fig231>

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

“Never give up on someone with mental illness. When “I” is replaced by “We”, illness becomes wellness.”

~Shannon L. Adler

- Get active! Exercise, go to the gym, take a walk in a local park or mall.
- Do not spend a lot of time in isolation. Try to spend more time with friends or close family members.
- Do something fun or rewarding that you once enjoyed.
- Engage in activities that are inspirational (attend a church service, listen to positive music or a podcast, watch your favorite TV show).
- Set small realistic goals for yourself (I will work out 2 days this week).
- For more ideas, see our list of pleasant activities and learn more about the importance of getting engaged to improve your mood.

Reminder: You may not see improvements in your mood immediately, but you may start to notice small changes over time. If you are still struggling with depression, here are some treatment options.

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR DEPRESSION

Contact your primary care doctor or healthcare provider to discuss your current symptoms and treatment options for depression. This may include a referral for individual therapy (talk therapy or counseling) with a mental health professional and/or a referral to a psychiatrist for medication management.

Individual Therapy: Here are a few resources to identify licensed mental health professionals in an area near you:

- [Therapy for Black Girls](#), [Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator](#), or [Psychology Today](#)
- Contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), if available through your employer. EAP programs provide brief high quality care to address your emotional and mental health needs, at no cost to you.
- Many community mental health clinics (university counseling center or mental health clinic) offer free or sliding scale fees to make mental health services more affordable. You can do a Google search to identify local community mental health clinics in your area.

Medication: Can be prescribed through a psychiatrist or your primary care doctor to help improve your mood. The provider will assess your current and past symptoms to determine the best medication to prescribe. It is important to note that some individuals may need to try different types of medication, before finding one that is effective in treating the depression.

“Our future is not determined by who we are and what we feel today.

Our future is determined by the actions we take today.”

~ Dr. Jessica Henry

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Resources During Crisis or Distress

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Visit, <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> or dial 1-888-628-9454 to speak to someone.

The Veterans Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Responders will work with you to help you get through any personal crisis, even if that crisis does not involve thoughts of suicide. Dial 1-800-273-8255 and (Press 1) to talk to someone now. A confidential chat is also available online or through text. To chat online (<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ChatTermsOfService.aspx>) or send a text to 838255 to receive confidential support anonymously.

To Learn More About Depression

National Institute of Mental Health

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>

Anxiety and Depression Association of America

<https://adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/ask-and-learn/resources#>

National Alliance on Mental Illness

<https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Depression>

Suicide Prevention Lifeline

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

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