

# Depression

## What is it?

- Depression (or major depressive disorder) is a mood disorder that affects an individual's mood and motivation as well as leads to cognitive, emotional, and physical problems.
- Depression is more than feeling sad.

## Other Forms of Depression

- Persistent depressive disorder
  - Depressed mood lasts for at least two years.
  - May have episodes of major depression along with periods of less severe symptoms, but symptoms last for at least two years.
- Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)
  - Onset of depression during winter months when there is less light.
  - Lifts during spring and summer, but it predictably returns in the winter, linked with withdrawal, increased sleep and weight gain.
  - Light therapy can help.
- Postpartum Depression
  - Women experience major depression symptoms during pregnancy or after delivery.
  - Typically lifts after two weeks following the birth, but it makes it hard for new mothers to care for themselves and/or their babies.

## Symptoms

Diagnosis = Symptoms lasting at least two weeks and has at least five of the following symptoms:

- Feeling sad, empty, hopeless, or having a depressed mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Change in appetite: experience either weight loss or gain
- Change in sleep: excessive sleep or trouble sleeping (insomnia)
- Change in physical activity: restlessness or slowed movements and speech
- Loss of energy or fatigue
- Feeling of worthlessness or excessive guilt
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide

## Depression is Common

- According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, "more than 19 million US adults had at least one major depressive episode in the past year."

## Treatment Options for Depression

- Psychotherapy
- Medication
- Exercise