

Combining Therapies

Many times treatment for depression is most effective when several different treatment approaches are used. Psychotherapy and drug treatment often go hand-in-hand in cases of clinical depression. Antidepressant medication has advanced in leaps and bounds over the last few years. The new drug treatments for depression are safer and have far fewer side effects than medication used as recently as ten years ago. And, psychotherapy, is of course, completely confidential.

If you or someone you know is experiencing problems with depression, the Center for Work and Family Life can help. Professionally trained staff is available for short-term counseling.

HOW DO I CONTACT THE CENTER FOR WORK AND FAMILY LIFE (CWFL)?

If you are a USC staff or faculty member and are interested in scheduling an appointment with a counselor or receiving information regarding resources and referrals, phone the CWFL at (213) 821-0800. If you are an immediate family member of a USC employee, you may also phone the Center directly to request services. CWFL services are available at all USC sites by special appointment.

The Center for Work and Family Life is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

DEPRESSION

© University of Southern California
Center for Work and Family Life

University Park Campus

University Village
3375 South Hoover, Suite E206
Los Angeles, CA 90007-7794

Health Science Campus

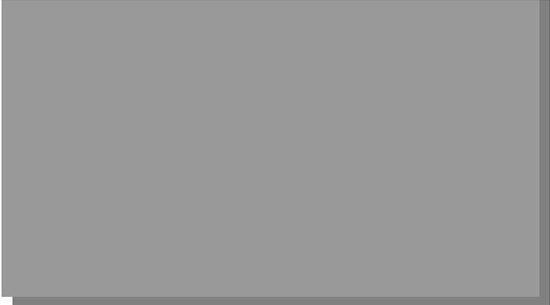
Soto Street Building
Room 112
2001 N. Soto Street
Los Angeles, CA 90033

Phone: (213) 821-0800
Fax: (213) 747-8304

D e p r e s s i o n



center for
work & family
life



USC
Employee Assistance Program
www.usc.edu/worklife

DEPRESSION

What is Depression?

Life is full of good times and bad, happiness and sorrow. But if you've been feeling "down" for more than a few weeks or are having difficulty functioning in daily life, you may be experiencing more than just the "blues." You may be suffering from a common, yet serious medical illness called clinical depression.

The good news is clinical depression is highly treatable. Most people with depression, however, do not seek the professional help they need—often because they don't know the symptoms, think depression will go away on its own, or are embarrassed to talk about how they're feeling.

What Causes Depression?

The question of what causes depression has no simple answers. All that is known for certain is that depression is the leading reason people seek mental health care.

Researchers continue to explore the interaction between an underlying biological risk, and such situational conditions as family or work stress, or grief. However, many depressive episodes appear spontaneously and are not associated with any life event, physical illness, or other risk factor. Depression has been associated with:

- *Genetics and family history.* Research has established that depressive disorders run in families. Rates of depression are consistently higher among children of depressed parents than among the general population. Research on the genetic basis of depressive disorders continues in the hope of discovering more about the biological basis of depression.
- *Other physical illnesses and conditions.* Sometimes the onset of a depressive disorder is associated with acute or chronic physical illnesses. Depression also is associated with hormonal abnormalities or with such medications as antihypertensive drugs.
- *Life events.* Traumatic life events (e.g., loss of a loved one, divorce, relocation, or major

financial upheaval) may be associated with the onset of a depressive disorder.

- *Psychology.* Certain personality traits, particularly undue dependence and low self-esteem, can signal a susceptibility to depression. These traits also can affect the symptoms or severity of a depressive episode. Certain behavior patterns also may contribute. People who view the world as cruel and unsupportive, who see themselves as unworthy, and who consider the future hopeless are particularly depression-prone. It appears that this kind of thinking develops in childhood or adolescence.
- *Alcoholism:* Depression and alcohol dependence are two common disorders that frequently go together. As a result, sorting out the various symptoms of each disorder and determining whether the symptoms of one are caused by the other often prove difficult. In turn, this uncertainty hampers decision-making concerning treatment. Nevertheless, it is important to treat both.

What Are the Symptoms of Depression?

Symptoms of depression may be any (or several) of the following:

- A persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood;
- Loss of satisfaction with life;
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism;
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness;
- Diminished capacity to give or receive affection;
- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities (including sex);
- Sleep disturbances (including early-morning waking, insomnia, or oversleeping);
- Eating disturbances (including weight gain or loss and changes in appetite);
- Physical aches and pains (including headaches and lower back pain);
- Excessive crying;
- Restlessness, irritability, or hyperactivity;
- Decreased energy, fatigue, or slowed thinking;

- Difficulty in concentrating, remembering, or making decisions;
- Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempts;
- Substance abuse / misuse;

When four or more of these symptoms persist for more than two weeks, they may be outward indications of a clinical depression.

Depression in the Workplace

Clinical depression has become one of America's most costly illnesses. Left untreated, depression is as costly as heart disease or AIDS to the U.S. economy, costing over \$43.7 billion in absenteeism from work (over 200 million days lost from work each year), lost productivity and direct treatment costs. Depression tends to affect people in their prime working years and may last a lifetime if untreated. However, more than 80 percent of people with clinical depression can be successfully treated. With early recognition, intervention, and support, most employees can overcome clinical depression and pick up where they left off.

Employees Attitudes Towards Depression

- Many employees are unaware they have depression, and they do not associate symptoms they may be having to depression.
- Often depressed employees will not seek treatment because they fear the affect it might have on their job and they are concerned about confidentiality.
- Many employees are concerned that their insurance is not adequate to cover costs.

Depression Help

A wide variety of treatment options are available for dealing with depression. Some include:

- Psychotherapy
- Support groups
- Medication/antidepressants
- Natural remedies
- Hypnosis
- Meditation
- Exercise
- Any combination of the above