

DEPRESSION

Identification:

Changes in mood are a normal part of the human condition. However, when feelings of sadness or other symptoms of depression are severe, go on for prolonged periods of time, or significantly affect our daily functioning, then we may be suffering from depression. Symptoms of depression can vary a lot from person to person, however some of the most common symptoms of depression include:

- Sadness
- Sleep disturbance
- Change in appetite
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Difficulties concentrating
- Memory problems
- Decreased sexual interest
- Social withdrawal
- Fatigue
- Excessive worry
- Self-criticism
- Lack of interest in everyday activities
- Suicidal thoughts

Remember that depressive feelings and symptoms are on a continuum and treatment is going to be most successful if it is tailored to your individual situation.

Coping Strategies:

There are many potential ways of coping with depression and reducing depressive symptoms. Here are 30 of the most common and successful strategies.

1. Become aware of the early warning signs that you are getting depressed so that you can apply coping strategies at an early stage in the depressive cycle.
2. Identify and deal with any potential stressors that underlie your depression.
3. Schedule your daily activities so that you maintain a routine.

4. Make a daily list of positive experiences or accomplishments to shift your focus to the positive.
5. Set realistic goals for yourself on a daily basis so that you have a sense of purpose in your life.
6. Avoid sleeping during the day as it will disrupt your sleep cycle.
7. Build enjoyable activities in your daily schedule.
8. Exercise on a regular basis.
9. Rebuild or expand your social circle.
10. Live one day at a time rather than always worrying about the future.
11. Maintain a balanced diet.
12. Learn relaxation skills to reduce your life stress.
13. Keep a journal of your thoughts and feelings.
14. Limit your alcohol consumption since alcohol is a depressant of your central nervous system.
15. Establish a healthy sleep cycle.
16. Listen to your favorite music.
17. Get in touch with your spirituality.
18. Spend time outdoors.
19. Get a pet. It can give you the unconditional support you may be looking for.
20. Develop some new hobbies or return to some old hobbies you previously enjoyed.
21. Stop procrastinating.
22. Develop and use some positive daily affirmations.
23. Bring laughter back into your life through books, TV shows, movies, or other life situations.
24. Get involved in some volunteer work.
25. Learn how to be more assertive.

26. Try using full spectrum lighting if your depression is worse over the winter season.
27. Get some professional counselling. (Visit the SCS website for more information on the counselling services we provide).
28. Go to a depression support group.
29. Talk to staff at the 24 Hour Distress Line (ph. 780-482-4357).
30. Do a trial on an anti-depressant medication. (See your family doctor or a physician at the University Health Centre).