

# DEPRESSION

## WHAT IS IT?

Depression can be described as feeling sad, hopeless, gloomy, “down in the dumps”, and/or empty.

Other symptoms of depression vary from person to person and may include:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Trouble sleeping (e.g. difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or sleeping too much)
- Loss of interest or enjoyment in many or almost all activities
- Feelings of inadequacy or low self-esteem; or worthlessness
- Withdrawing from friends/family
- Irritability/anger or increased anxiety
- Changes in appetite or weight (increase or decrease)
- Physical pain (e.g. headaches, joint/muscle aches)

It is not uncommon for someone to experience these feelings or symptoms briefly for a few days or weeks during the course of their lifetime. However, if profound sadness and symptoms of depression exceed two weeks and negatively affect a person’s day-to-day functioning, additional support may be helpful.

There are several risk factors for depression that include:

- Family history of depression or other similar mental health disorders
- Recent or current stressful life events like unemployment, poverty, social isolation,
- Regular drug & alcohol use.

## HOW TO COPE WITH DEPRESSION:

- Take care of yourself. This can include making and sticking to a sleep schedule, keeping your stress level in check, eating healthy foods and prioritizing self-care.
- Do things that relax or energize you like listening or creating music, writing, running, cycling, enjoying nature and cooking.
- Exercise. Walking, weight training, swimming, martial arts, dancing, and other rhythmic exercises that require you to move both your arms and legs offer the most benefits for depression.
- Reach out and stay connected. Whether it’s contacting friends, family members or even new classmates or co-workers, try to resist the urge to isolate yourself.
- Challenge negative thinking by reminding yourself these kinds of thoughts are symptoms of depression. Challenge them by asking yourself if you would believe the negative thoughts if you weren’t feeling depressed.

## HOW DO I SUPPORT SOMEONE WHO IS DEPRESSED?

- Check in with them. Invite them to talk and offer your support even though they may not take you up on it the first time.
- Listen to, respect and acknowledge their experience even if you disagree or don’t understand their situation.
- Support their efforts to maintain healthy habits like exercising, following a sleep schedule and socializing.
- Connect them with social support like community organizations, religious groups or mental health support groups and encourage professional help such as counseling.
- Get them help if they mention thoughts of suicide.
  - Public Safety on campus – (215) 641-5522
  - Dial 9-1-1 or
  - The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – (800) 273-8255

## IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO SEEK SUPPORT OR COUNSELING.

For free, confidential counseling for Gwynedd Mercy University students, contact:

Counseling Services | Griffin Complex | 2nd Floor  
counseling@gmercyu.edu



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