WHEN TO SEEK professional HELP

Three questions could help you consider whether to seek professional help.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL DOWN?
Whenever you think about class?
On and off?
Every evening?

HOW LONG HAVE YOU FELT THIS WAY?
Days? Weeks? Months? Years?

HOW BAD DOES IT GET?
Are your feelings fleeting?
Do you have trouble getting through each day?

INDICATORS THAT YOU MAY WANT TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP:
- You are struggling to deal with recurring or new depressive symptoms
- Your symptoms increased in frequency, severity, or persistence
- Friends, family, roommates, or professors have shared concern about your well-being

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
University of Pennsylvania

HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL DOWN?
OFFICE OF THE CHAPLAIN
215-898-8456

HELP LINE
215-898-HELP (4357)

RAP LINE
(Reach A Peer, 9PM - 1AM)
215-573-2RAP (2727)

SPECIAL SERVICES
215-898-6600

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE
215-746-3535

OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR UNIVERSITY LIFE/
STUDENT INTERVENTION SERVICES
215-898-6081

WEINGARTEN LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER
215-573-9235

JULY 2017

Penn RESOURCES
CAPS
(including nights/weekends to reach CAPS counselor on call)
215-898-7021

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CAPS Counseling & Psychological Services University of Pennsylvania

215-898-7021
(including nights/weekends to reach CAPS counselor on call)

3624 MARKET STREET, FIRST FLOOR WEST
Philadelphia, PA 19104

MON | FRI 9 am - 5 pm
TUES | WED | THURS 9 am - 7 pm
SAT 10 am - 3 pm

www.vpul.upenn.edu/caps
Americans between the ages of 18 and 24 have a diagnosable mental illness and more than 10 percent of college students report being diagnosed with, or being treated for, depression or anxiety in the past year. In national surveys, college students regularly cite depression and anxiety as impeding their academic performance.

What is depression?
Everyone occasionally feels down, disappointed, or upset. These normal feelings can be triggered by events, perceptions, and expectations. If prolonged, persistent sadness becomes severe and interferes with daily life, you may be experiencing “depression.” Depression can involve lethargy, lack of concentration, and motivation.

Triggers of depression?
College students can experience depression as a result of external factors such as:
- Academic struggles
- Problems making or keeping friends
- Breakup of a relationship
- Homesickness
- Death of a friend or loved one

Sometimes, depression springs from within:
- Having unreasonable expectations of yourself and others
- Lack of self-confidence or value
- Difficulty dealing with disappointment
- Being overly negative/unable to see the positives

Students may get depressed for no obvious reason, which could be a sign of a chemical or hormonal imbalance.

What can I do when I’m feeling blue?
- Share feelings with friends, family, residential staff
- Challenge pessimistic thinking and negative beliefs
- Maintain healthy routine of class, meals, and sleep
- Stay active and exercise to release endorphins for uplifting effect on mind and body
- Help others to see that everyone has struggles
- Don’t overload or overcommit
- Avoid unnecessary stress until you have more energy

How can psychotherapy help?
Psychotherapy may be used alone or in combination with medication. Treatment can focus on past experiences affecting your present life or take other approaches depending on the source of depression.

Psychotherapy can help you grieve a loss, cope with a breakup, identify social/interpersonal difficulties, or target negative, self-defeating thoughts. Research suggests that psychotherapy effectively reduces depression and anxiety symptoms and positively impacts the immunity system.

How can medication help?
Recent research suggests that changes in the brain chemistry, genetics, and body hormones may be linked to depression. Medications are not usually substitutes for therapy but work best in conjunction with it.

Antidepressants target some of the chemical imbalances that can alter depressive symptoms. Consult with a psychiatrist to discuss your needs and options.

You may be experiencing depression if several of these symptoms are interfering with your ability to function and enjoy life for a period of time—typically two weeks or more.