UNDERSTANDING depression

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
University of Pennsylvania

215-898-7021
(especially hotlines leading to teach. CAPS university 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 - 1 pm

www.vpdl.ups.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 impairing 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 interfere with learning, 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
  - Break-up of a relationship
  - Loneliness
  - 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 positive

STUDENTS MAY GET DEPRESSED FOR NO OVERT REASONS, WHICH COULD BE A SIGN OF A CHEMICAL OR HORMONAL IMBALANCE.

SYSTEMS of depression

EMOTIONAL:

- Feeling sad, blue, or unmotivated
- Feeling nervous, pessimistic, irritable
- Lost interest in pleasurable activities
- Difficulty concentrating, deciding, remembering
- Feeling worthless or like a failure
- Feeling hopeless about the future

BEHAVIORAL:

- Withdrawing from social life or responsibilities
- Slipping class or not being able to finish work
- Neglecting personal appearance
- Using increasing use of alcohol or other drugs

PHYSIOLOGICAL:

- Increase or decrease in appetite
- Insomnia or inability to stay awake
- Fatigue, loss of energy, mood, concentration
- Loss of interest in sex
- Other pain resistant to medicine/treatment

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 overlook or overreact
- Avoid unnecessary stress until you have more energy

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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 day?
- HOW LONG HAVE YOU FELT THIS WAY? Days? Weeks? Months? Years?
- HOW BAD DOES IT GET? Are your feelings flooding? 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
- Conflicts, family, roommates, or your friends have shared concerns about your well-being

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 – especially two weeks or more.

Penn RESOURCES

CARES (including nights/weekends/non-CAPs.university on call)

OFFICE OF THE CHAPLAIN
215-898-8456

HELP LINE 215-898-4357

RAP LINE (Reach a Peer, 9PM - 1AM)
215-573-2499 (2277)

SPECIAL SERVICES 215-898-6600

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE 215-746-5555


WEIDENBAUM LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER 215-573-9325