

# Is Your Partner Depressed?

If you are concerned and wonder if your partner is depressed, consider the following symptoms of depression: aches and pains, fatigue, loss of appetite, significant weight loss or gain; sleep problems; feels sad, disappointed, confused or anxious; experiences a loss of interest in activities; isolates from others; finds little pleasure in life; expresses recurrent thoughts of death or suicide; appears to feel worthless or excessively guilty.

Most people feel down from time to time because it is a natural response to stress and tension but with depression these feelings are severe or long-lasting feelings that occur nearly every day for two weeks or more.

## It Takes Two to Cope With Depression Steps to Help Your Partner

### • See a doctor

- Check to be sure there is not a purely physical reason for the depression
- Obtain a referral to a mental health professional
- The best treatment for clinical depression is generally a combination of medications and therapy.

### • Have realistic expectations about depression

- Be patient about what you can and cannot do to help your partner
- Know that the depression is NOT your fault
- Depression may affect your sex life – your partner's interest may not be the same, (encourage your partner to talk to the physician if this continues months after treatment begins).

### • Offer Unconditional love and support

Communicate to your partner that you:

- 1) Do not blame your partner or yourself
- 2) Can work as a team to conquer the depression
- 3) Continue to support and love your partner (Keep in mind that depressed people often refuse the help – do not take it personally)

### • Attempt to keep your routines

- Participate in as many of your usual activities as you can
- Maintain your friendships
- Make time for yourself – maintain your own emotional balance

### • Talk to your partner about your feelings

- Sharing your feelings and experiences is what is needed to show your partner that you need to solve problems together.

### • Ask for help

-You need support too --your work and social life, health and emotions can be impacted by your partner's depression.

## **More Facts About Depression**

### **Depression is Common:**

- It affects millions of people each year; however, it is widely misunderstood.
- Depression is often ignored or untreated -- some people may not recognize the symptoms, are afraid of appearing weak or feel too depressed to take action.
- Depression can be treated successfully and people start to feel well again in a few weeks.

### **What Causes Depression?**

- family history (may increase risk)
- imbalances of certain chemicals in the brain
- major life changes (positive and negative can trigger depression) Examples: death or a promotion
- major illnesses
- use of alcohol or other drugs
- certain medications
- it can occur for no apparent reason

### **Depression Can Affect Anyone**

- older people
- middle-aged
- young adults
- adolescents
- children
- women are more likely to be diagnosed with depression than men—the reason is not known (could be biological differences or that women are more likely to seek help for depression).

### **Types of Depression:**

- Major depression (interferes with normal life; can continue for months or years if not treated)
- Seasonal Affective disorder (SAD)-results from changes in the season most common in fall or winter(decrease in sunlight)
- Dysthymia- mildly depressed for years
- Bipolar disorder
- experience periods of depression and mania (highs and lows)