

How to Recognize Major Depression

By Dr. Peter Robbins & Dr. Kevin Downing

There is a lot of depression in America today, including the Church. Researchers interviewed more than 18,000 adults in five cities and found that about 23 percent had two or more symptoms of major depression. Fifteen percent of people with major depression kill themselves, and major depressive disorders increase the likelihood of death in elderly people by 59 percent.

Depression is the “common cold” of mental health. The good news is that professional therapy is highly effective for the treatment of depression. Here are ten “Red Flags” to help you recognize symptoms of major depression.

The Ten Key Warning Signs of Depression

1. Feelings of worthlessness, excessive or inappropriate guilt nearly every day.
 - “I’m no good.”
 - “I can’t do anything right.”
 - “I feel awful about myself.”
2. Feelings of worthlessness, excessive or inappropriate guilt nearly every day.
 - “I’m no good.”
 - “I can’t do anything right.”
 - “I feel awful about myself.”
3. Either can’t sleep or sleeps a great deal.
 - “I can’t seem to get enough sleep.”
 - “I lay awake most nights.”
 - “I just can’t stop my mind from going.”
4. Marked diminished interest or pleasure in almost all daily activities.
 - “I don’t have fun anymore.”
 - “Nothing interests me anymore.”
 - “Life just seems dead.”

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5. Diminished ability to think or concentrate, or indecisiveness.

- “I just can’t seem to keep my mind on things at work.”
- “I just can’t get things done at home.”
- “There are too many decisions and I feel overwhelmed.”

6. Significant weight loss or weight gain. Significant gain or loss of appetite.

- “I just can’t help myself.”
- “Eating makes me feel better.”
- “I don’t feel hungry anymore.”

7. Being overly active or under active nearly every day. (Usually this is observed by others.)

8. Depressed mood most of the day. This is usually manifest in agitation or by extreme subjectivity in interpreting interpersonal or external events.

- “Nobody likes me.”
- “I just can’t take it anymore.”
- “I feel like giving up.”

9. Recurrent thoughts of death, usually without a specific plan.

- “I’m tired of living.”
- “I can’t carry on anymore.”
- “I just want to die and end it all.”

10. There appears to be no organic basis to these feelings.

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Scriptures for Depression

The Bible doesn't use the word "depression", but it does describe people who are depressed.

Philippians 4:4 commands us to rejoice (whether we feel like it or not) and then goes on to tell us not to worry.

James 1:2 asks us to "*Consider it all joy when we fall into various trials.*"

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 tells us to "*Be joyful always, pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*"

The life of Moses, David, Jonah and Elijah shows us that we can overcome depression with the help of God.

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