



SCI-BONO
DISCOVERY CENTRE
SCIENCE CAREER CENTRE

Depression



What is Depression?

The term “depression” often characterizes feelings of being sad, discouraged, hopeless, irritable, unmotivated, as well as a general lack of interest or pleasure in life.

When these feelings last for a short period of time, it may be called passing case of “the blues.” But when they last for more than two weeks and interfere with regular daily activities, it’s likely to be a depressive disorder.

Depressive disorders, also known as mood disorders, include three main types: major depression, persistent depressive disorder, and bipolar disorder, and they can occur with any anxiety disorder.

Depression Types Explained

Major depression involves a combination of symptoms that are disabling and interfere with your ability to work, study, and sleep. It may occur once in your lifetime or more frequently. Or you may experience it following the death of a loved one, a romantic breakup, a medical illness, or other life event. Some people may experience physical aches and pains, leading them to believe that these are symptoms of an undiagnosed physical ailment. Others may feel that life is not worth living, and a small number may attempt to end their lives.

Depression is different in each person. No two people experience the same combination, severity, frequency, and duration of symptoms.

Persistent depressive disorder is a form of depression that usually continues for at least two years. Although it is less severe than major depression, it involves the same symptoms, mainly low energy, poor appetite or overeating, and insomnia or oversleeping. It can show up as stress, and irritability.

Bipolar disorder is characterized by moods that shift from severe highs (mania), or mild highs (hypomania) to severe lows (depression). During the manic phase, a person experience abnormal elation, irritability, a decreased need for sleep, increased talkativeness, racing thoughts and inappropriate social behaviour. During the depressive phase, a person experiences the symptoms of major depression.



Causes

Causes are as different as the individuals who suffer from depression. There is usually no one cause, but often a combination of factors.

Family history:

Depression can run in families for generations.

Trauma and stress:

The breakup of a relationship, death of a loved one or financial problems can bring on depression.

Pessimistic personality:

People with low self-esteem, a negative outlook or who are easily overwhelmed by stress are at higher risk for depression.

Physical conditions:

Serious medical conditions like cancer, heart disease or AIDS often bring on stress and physical weakness that can lead to depression.



General Symptoms

If you experience any of these symptoms nearly every day for more than two weeks, you may have depression:

- Constant feelings of downheartedness, sadness or emptiness
- Cry easily
- Little interest or pleasure in daily activities and hobbies
- Everything feels like an effort
- No pleasure or joy in anything
- Loss of energy or tiredness for no reason
- Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Indecisiveness and trouble concentrating or remembering
- Restless and easily annoyed or irritated
- Persistent negative and/or disturbing thoughts
- Changes in appetite, with significant weight loss or gain
- Feelings of isolation
- Thoughts of suicide or death

SOS Contacts

South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG):
011 234 4837

Cipla 24hr Mental Health Helpline:
0800 456 789

Suicide Crisis Line: 0800 567 576



Steps to Help Yourself

- Do your best to remain active – Choose an activity you enjoy and make it part of your regular routine.
- Avoid being alone too much – Seek out family and friends you can talk to and who will listen.
- Do not set difficult goals or take on added responsibility – Break larger tasks into smaller ones that you can accomplish.
- Avoid making major life decisions – Try taking it one day at a time.
- Go easy on yourself – Don't expect too much, too fast. Treat yourself with kindness and respect.
- Follow your doctor's orders – Take your medication as prescribed, eat right and keep your appointments.

How We Can Help

Finding the right counsellor, psychologist, or mental health expert to work with may take some time.

We offer a range of counselling and therapeutic services to person experiencing mental health challenges and experiences affecting your current mental wellness.

Contact Us

Contact the Science Career Centre at Sci-Bono Discovery Centre for more information or to book an appointment:

Telephone: 011 639- 8400 (switchboard) or 8479 / 8450 / 8434

Visit: Science Career Centre, Sci-Bono Discovery Centre

Physical Address: Corner of Miriam Makeba and Helen Joseph Streets, Newtown, Johannesburg

Website Address: www.sci-bono.co.za

E-mail: admin.careers@sci-bono.co.za