Depression has a variety of symptoms*. If you’re only seeing the sadness, you’re missing something.

*See complete major depressive disorder symptom list inside
If you only see the sadness, not other symptoms, look again.

Depression isn’t just sadness.

Depression (major depressive disorder) is made up of a variety of symptoms experienced every day or nearly every day for a period of time, including:

- sadness
- loss of interest or pleasure
- sleeping problems
- forgetfulness
- difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- slow physical movements/thinking or restlessness
- fatigue or lack of energy
- considerable weight or appetite change
- feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- thoughts of suicide

These symptoms are common in people with depression. They not only impact how you feel, but they can also affect how you think, and how you go about your day.

So if you’re experiencing a variety of depression symptoms, you’re not alone.

Depression: The Inside Story.

It’s believed that depression is associated with chemicals in the brain called neurotransmitters. If these neurotransmitters are out of balance, a person may experience depressive symptoms.

What depression looks like

MRIs (Magnetic Resonance Imagings) have shown that the brains of people with depression look different from the brains of people who aren’t depressed. More specifically, the parts of the brain involved in mood, thinking, sleep, appetite, and behavior look different.

These images may help us understand why depression causes a variety of symptoms. However, they do not reveal why the depression has occurred and cannot be used to diagnose it.

Many people do get better with treatment. Medications, psychotherapy, and other methods can also help.
“The sadness weighs me down.”

“I’m in a fog. I can barely think.”

“I’m so tired all the time.”

LOOKING FOR A VARIETY OF DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS: A CHECKLIST.

Many people who experience a variety of symptoms beyond sadness don’t realize that these symptoms are linked to depression—so they don’t get help for them.

It’s important to talk to your healthcare provider about all the symptoms you’re experiencing. Take a moment to fill in the checklist below and bring it to your next appointment.

☐ I feel sad or hopeless
☐ I’ve lost interest or pleasure in things I used to enjoy
☐ I’m having trouble sleeping or sleep too much
☐ I forget things easily
☐ I have trouble thinking or concentrating on things like reading the newspaper or watching television
☐ It’s hard to make decisions
☐ I feel like I think more slowly than I used to
☐ Some of my movements are slow, like speech and blinking
☐ I feel restless
☐ I have less energy and I’m tired a lot
☐ I feel guilty or worthless
☐ I’ve lost or gained a lot of weight, or my appetite has changed
☐ I have thoughts about taking my own life

How difficult have your symptoms made it for you to work, take care of things at home, or get along with people?

☐ Not difficult at all
☐ Somewhat difficult
☐ Very difficult
☐ Extremely difficult
YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER CAN HELP YOU FIND THE HOPE YOU’VE LOST WITH DEPRESSION.

TALKING TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

It can be difficult to talk about depression. But it’s a common and treatable condition. And your healthcare provider is there to help create a treatment plan that’s right for you.

The more information you share about your specific symptoms, the more your healthcare provider can develop an individual treatment plan for you.

SEEKING ANSWERS

It’s important for you to know what’s going on. So ask questions. Here are some that may apply to you:

“Are all the symptoms I’m feeling part of my depression?”

“Is there anything I can do about the other symptoms I’m experiencing beyond sadness?”

“I’m having a hard time sleeping. What can I do about that?”

“The sadness seems to be a little better, but I still have a hard time focusing. Can you help with that?”

“I want to be more like myself.”

GETTING HELP FOR YOUR DEPRESSION.

The variety of depression symptoms can make it a big challenge to engage in everyday life.

If you’re experiencing symptoms that affect how you’re feeling, thinking, and getting through your day, ask your healthcare provider about what’s right for you. There’s always hope.

Seeking help is an important step in your journey. Below are some resources that can help you to better manage depression:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK
Skilled, trained counselors are available to help, 24 hours a day.

National Alliance on Mental Illness: www.nami.org
A nationwide mental health network, with links to education and support programs.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance: www.dbsalliance.org
A national organization providing hope, help, and support for people with mood disorders.
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