

Depression affects more people than any other mental health condition—more than 19 million Americans each year. Could it be affecting you?

Everyone gets down from time to time, but sometimes it's more than "the blues." Clinical depression is a real illness that can be treated effectively. Unfortunately, fewer than half of the people who have depression seek treatment.

Too many people believe that depression is a normal part of life's ups and downs, rather than a real health problem. As a result, they may delay seeking help or not seek help at all. It's important to know that depression is real, and it can be effectively treated.

What Are the Signs of Depression?

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" mood
- Difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep or sleeping more than usual
- Reduced appetite and weight loss, or increased appetite and weight gain
- Loss of pleasure and interest in once-enjoyable activities
- Restlessness, irritability
- Difficulty concentrating at work or at school, or difficulty remembering things or making decisions
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless
- Thoughts of suicide or death

If you experience five or more of these symptoms for two weeks or longer, you may have depression. See a doctor or mental health professional for help right away. It's also important to connect to the people in your life who care about you and can give you support. Getting enough rest and engaging in physical activity can help too. For additional tips on protecting your mental health, visit www.LiveYourLifeWell.org.

For more information on this topic or referrals to local services, visit our online Frequently Asked Questions section at www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/faqs, contact Mental Health America or your local Mental Health America affiliate.

If you or someone you know is in crisis now, seek help immediately. Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to reach a 24-hour crisis center or dial 911 for immediate assistance.

