



notice Changes in behavior, signs of depression.

THE WHY - RISK FACTORS/TRIGGERS: Certain factors that seem to increase the risk of developing or triggering depression. (*Just because someone may have some or many risk factors, it does not mean that they will necessarily develop depression.*)

Events that could be risk factors for depression:

- Exposure to stressful life events/abuse/trauma
- Difficult or abusive childhood
- Ongoing stress and anxiety (e.g. financial stress)
- Medical conditions and hormonal changes
- Side effects of medication
- Illness that is chronic, or associated with pain
- Brain injury
- Family history/genetics
- Learned behavior
- Chemical imbalance
- Substance misuse and sensitivity
- Seasonal changes
- Environmental factors
- Previous episode of a mental illness or another mental illness

THE SIGNS / SYMPTOMS of DEPRESSION: Physical, emotional, behavioral and thought CHANGES in someone that we can **NOTICE** and talk about.

Common symptoms of depression:

- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and/or helplessness
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable
- Overeating or appetite loss
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment
- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" feelings
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts

Signs of suicide:

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person
- Feeling hopeless or having no sense of purpose
- Feeling rage or uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
- Feeling trapped - like there is no way out
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from friends, family and society
- Feeling anxious, agitated, or unable to sleep or sleeping all the time
- Experiencing dramatic mood changes

Risk factors for suicide:

- Depression and other mental disorders, or a substance-abuse disorder (often in combination with other mental disorders).
- Stressful life events, in combination with other risk factors, such as depression.
- Prior suicide attempt
- Family history of mental disorder or substance abuse
- Family history of suicide
- Family violence, including physical or sexual abuse
- Firearms in the home, the method used in more than half of suicides
- Incarceration
- Exposure to the suicidal behavior of others, such as family members, peers, or media figures



invite

Invite yourself to start the conversation.

What to do when you suspect someone may be at risk for suicide? Take it seriously!

- 50% to 75% of all people who attempt suicide tell someone about their intention
- If someone you know shows the warning signs above, the time to act is now.

Ask Questions:

- Begin by telling the suicidal person you are concerned about them.
- Tell them specifically what they have said or done that makes you feel concerned about suicide.
- Don't be afraid to ask whether the person is considering suicide, and whether they have a particular plan or method in mind. These questions will not push them toward suicide if they were not considering it. Ask the question.
- Ask if they are seeing a clinician or are taking medication so the appropriate person can be contacted.
- Do not try to argue someone out of suicide. Instead, let them know that you care, that they are not alone and that they can get help.



challenge

Challenge stigma.

Depression is an illness, just like a physical illness.

- Challenge yourself to get out of your comfort zone.
- Challenge people to listen.
- Challenge yourself to become educated.
- Challenge yourself to support.



empower

You are the difference.

Empower yourself and others to take action.

Know that your words and actions have a profound effect on how someone thinks, acts and feels (their mental health).

- Encourage healthy practices
- Promote healthy self-esteem
- Practice good problem solving skills
- Recognize feeling of control in their own life
- Find spirituality
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- Foster consistent home/family routine
- Encourage parental/familial support
- Monitor regular school attendance and academic performance
- Build a good social support system
- Create constructive recreation and community bonding
- Offer consistent emotional support
- Understand the illness by getting educated and educating others