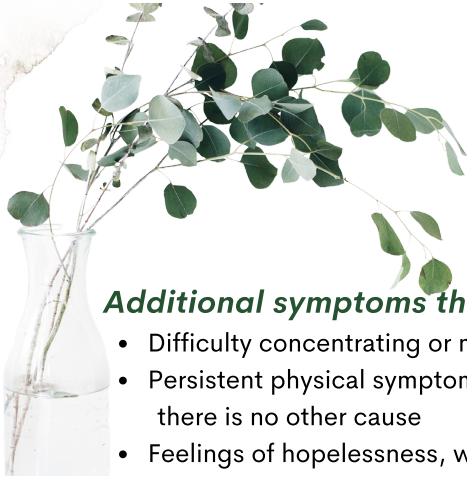


Counseling Corner: October DEPRESSION AWARENESS MONTH

Depression is defined as a disorder that causes persistent feelings of sadness and low mood.



Signs & Symptoms of Depression ¹

Symptoms you may be familiar with:

- Sad or "empty" mood
- Tearfulness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Additional symptoms that may be unfamiliar:

- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Persistent physical symptoms—headaches, digestive issues, body aches—for which there is no other cause
- Feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, guilt
- Extreme fatigue, oversleeping, or early-morning awakening
- Lack of motivation
- Weight changes: loss or gain
- Restlessness, irritability, anxiety



How do you know if depression is worsening? ⁴

Seek help if:

- Symptoms are intense or unrelenting
- Inability to fulfill your daily responsibilities
- Symptoms are paired with thoughts of self-harm, suicide, and substance use



Depression in College ³

College can be a catalyst for depression. Consider all the potential issues:

- major transition
- loss of previous support
- unstructured schedules
- new responsibilities
- erratic sleep habits
- relationship issues & breakups
- pressure to succeed academically
- excessive social media use
- anxiety over finances

You are not alone!

Causes ²

In a complex world without simple answers depression is no exception. Depression does not have a single cause. It can be triggered by events or occur spontaneously.

Trauma. Traumatic events can cause changes in the brain, especially how people respond to fear and stress.

Genetics. Mood disorders tend to run in families.

Social and Cultural. Systemic racism, inequality and political unrest.

Brain changes. Low levels of neurotransmitters like serotonin or norepinephrine.

Drug & Alcohol misuse. "Self-medication" in attempts to alleviate depression symptoms. Unfortunately, alcohol can worsen depression.

Life circumstances. Living conditions, stable employment and income, stressors within family system

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Where's God in all of this?

One of the most painful aspects of depression can be its effect on our relationship with God. You may:

- feel abandoned by God
- struggle to sense God's presence
- feel extreme doubt and confusion about your faith

Truths to Consider:

1. You are not cut off from God.

Jesus is with you (Mt. 28:20). He is well acquainted with suffering and suffers alongside of you now.

2. God's love and faithfulness never depends on us.

This is the gospel! God's love never depends on our good behavior, mood, ability to minister, or capacity to pray & worship. This is the good news.

3. You are not alone.

Reach out to friends, family, and your church. Seek professional help if necessary.

Helping a Friend⁴

- Do not try to "cheer up" up an individual
- Do not criticize or shame; depression is not their fault
- Do not expect an easy or quick fix
- Encourage them to make a counseling appointment
- Take care of yourself

Helping Yourself⁴

- Do your favorite activity or something new even if you don't feel like it
- Exercise to work off tension
- Avoid making decisions that make you feel trapped or confined; put them off until you can better cope
- Stay connected to friends & family
- Set up an MBI counseling appointment

Resources



App: Pray As You Go

"Mental Health Series" & "Walking Prayer"

App: Moodpath- Anxiety & Depression

Scripture: Psalm 27, 46, 51, 91, 93, 103, 121

Depression Screening [Mental Health America](https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/depression-screening)

Awareness is the first step to preventing and coping with depression. In observance of Depression Awareness Month, scan the code below to join millions in screening for depression! In just a few minutes you will receive an explanation of your results, resources, and recommended next steps!



Email us at
counselingservices@moody.edu
or stop by Smith 3!

References: 1 adaa.org 2 nami.org 3 childmind.org 4 counselingcenter.illinois.edu