

WHEN STRESS BECOMES DEPRESSION

Prolonged stress, an overwhelming combination of stressors, family history and/or a traumatic event can precipitate depression. It is important to know about the signs of depression. Depression affects 9.5% of the population in the United States.

SOME SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

- *Persistent feelings of worthlessness or inadequacy*
- *Feeling unable or helpless to deal with common life problems or challenging situations*
- *Ongoing sense of hopelessness or despair*
- *Changes in appetite and weight (either overeating or loss of appetite)*
- *Lack of energy and excessive, continuous fatigue*
- *Inability to concentrate*
- *Changes in sleep (not being able to fall asleep or oversleeping)*
- *Lack of interest in activities that used to be pleasurable or rewarding*
- *Excessive irritability or anger*
- *Numbness*
- *Unexplained physical ailments*
- *Continuous sense of feeling overwhelmed*
- *Isolating from others*
- *Thoughts of suicide*

It is not unusual for depressed men to also have alcohol and drug abuse problems, engage in reckless behavior or exhibit rage.

If you or someone in your life exhibits any of these behaviors for two weeks or more, please seek help. Talk to your health care provider or contact CARE Services. For more information about depression go to CARE Services website: www.uhs.berkeley.edu/facstaff/care

TREATMENT OF DEPRESSION

Depression is not “in one’s head”, a moral failing or a flaw of character. Depression, whatever may have caused it, is a *real illness* that affects the delicate chemical balance in our brains. Depression is not “the blues” and usually doesn’t improve without treatment. It is no less real than heart disease or diabetes.

There are many different treatments for depression that have proven effective. Many people have gotten better through psychotherapy (talk therapy) alone, or with appropriate life changes and medication. So far, the most effective treatment seems to be a combination of both psychotherapy and medication.

CARE Services for LBNL Employee Assistance Program

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