



Clinical Depression Fact Sheet

Clinical depression

Clinical depression is common – more than 19 million Americans suffer each year.¹

Depression can happen to anyone – all ages, races, ethnic, and income groups.

Depression is not a “normal” part of life – no matter what age, gender or health situation.

Research shows depression can complicate other serious medical conditions, such as heart disease and cancer.

Depression is serious – in some cases, serious enough to result in suicide.

What to look for...

- Loss of pleasure from daily life.
- Sad, anxious or “empty” mood.
- Sleeping too little or too much.
- Changes in weight and appetite.
- Feeling restless or irritable.
- Trouble concentrating, remembering or making decisions.
- Fatigue or loss of energy.
- Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless.
- Physical symptoms that don’t respond to treatment.
- Thoughts of death or suicide.

Treatment works.

Treatment for depression is almost always successful.

Yet, fewer than half of those suffering from depression seek treatment,² often because they don’t realize that they have a serious medical illness that is treatable.

Depression is not a personal weakness - it is a serious medical illness. And, for most people, treatment can be effective.

In the workplace...

Clinical depression is costly – one of the most costly illnesses in the world, along with heart disease, cancer and AIDS.

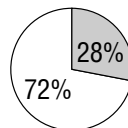
Depression most often affects people in their prime working years and, if untreated, it can last a lifetime.

Depression is one of the top three workplace problems, following family crisis and stress.³

At any given time, one out of every 20 employees suffers from depression.⁴

What depression costs:

Depression costs the U.S. economy \$43.7 billion annually.



Only 28% of that – \$12.4 billion – is for direct costs for treatment; almost three-quarters – 72% (\$31.3 billion) – accounts for decreased productivity, lost work days and other indirect costs.⁵

Lost productivity...

An estimated 200 million work days are lost each year due to employee depression.⁵

People with depressive symptoms spend more days in bed than those with diabetes, arthritis, back problems, lung problems or gastrointestinal disorders.⁶

Symptoms of clinical depression at work:

- Decreased productivity.
- Morale problems.
- Lack of cooperation.
- Excessive fatigue.
- Unexplained aches/pains.
- Safety problems. Accidents.
- Excessive absenteeism.
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse.

Why employees often don’t seek treatment:⁷

- Some believe they can handle it on their own.
- Some are unaware they have depression.
- Some are concerned about confidentiality.
- Some believe their insurance coverage won’t cover treatment.



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Women and depression

One (1) out of every eight (8) women can expect to suffer from clinical depression in her lifetime.⁸

For women, depression most often occurs in the early career years, between 25 and 44 years of age.⁹

In the United States each year, approximately 12 million women suffer from clinical depression.⁸

Gender differences

Depression is not gender-specific. Women and men both struggle with depression.

Women, however, experience depression approximately twice as often as do men.⁹

According to reports, women attempt suicide twice as often as do men.

Men, however, are more likely to die from suicide than women.¹⁵

At 14 to 18 years of age, girls have consistently higher rates of depression than do boys in this same age group.¹¹

Reasons why women may be at greater risk for depression...

- Reproductive, hormonal, genetic and other biological factors may contribute to depression in women (e.g., premenstrual syndrome, childbirth, infertility, menopause)¹⁰

- Social factors also may contribute to higher rates of clinical depression among women, including:

- > work stress
- > family responsibilities
- > roles and expectations
- > rates of sexual abuse
- > poverty.¹⁰

Truths for women about depression

Despite gender differences, depression is not a “normal part of being a woman,” nor is it a “female weakness.”

Myths

According to a National Mental Health Association survey,¹⁶ more than one-half (1/2) of women believe that:

- Depression is “normal” during menopause, so treatment is not necessary
- Depression is a “normal part of aging”
- It is normal to feel depressed for at least two weeks after giving birth.

PMS

Between 20-40% of women may experience premenstrual syndrome. An estimated 3-5% have symptoms severe enough to be classified as Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD), a PMS-associated form of depression.¹²

Childbirth

Approximately 10-15% of new mothers experience postpartum depression which most frequently occurs during the first year after birth.¹³

Eating Disorders

Eating disorders and depression in women often go hand-in-hand. Young females account for approximately 90-95% of people suffering from anorexia.¹⁴ Other eating disorders include compulsive overeating, often resulting in obesity, and bulimia.

Alcohol/drug abuse

One (1) in three (3) people who suffer from depression also struggle with substance abuse or dependence.¹⁴

Why people don't seek help

More than one-half (1/2) of the respondents to a National Mental Health Association survey identified denial as a barrier to treatment – i.e., they may realize that they feel bad but do not believe that they have depression. Forty one percent (41%) said that embarrassment or shame were barriers to seeking treatment.¹⁶



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Good News! Clinical depression is treatable. More than 80% of people suffering with depression can be helped successfully with medication, psychotherapy, or a combination of both.

For a free, confidential online depression screening, visit the National Mental Health Association's website at <http://www.nmha.org>.



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Endnotes —

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