

DO YOU KNOW THE FACTS? BREAKING DOWN MYTHS ABOUT DEPRESSION

1. MYTH: Depression doesn't affect *me*.

FACT: According to a recent survey by the American College Health Association, nearly half of all college students report feeling so depressed at some point in time they have trouble functioning. 15% of these students meet the criteria for clinical depression. This means that someone in your life that you care about (or maybe you) could face depression at some point during the college years.

3. MYTH: You can "snap out of it"

FACT: No one chooses to be depressed. People with depression cannot just "snap out of it" anymore than someone with diabetes can. It is NOT a sign of weakness or laziness. It is a health problem resulting from changes in brain function due to biological or environmental factors.

5. MYTH: Depression will go away on its own

FACT: For some, depression may go away without treatment, this is not usually the case. Without treatment, symptoms of depression can continue for weeks, months, or even years. Left untreated, depression can lead to suicide, the third leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 18-24. The good news—most people do get better with treatment.

7. MYTH: Talking about depression makes it worse.

FACT: While it's easy to see why someone might be worried about discussing how they feel, being alone with your thoughts can be even more harmful. A lot of people with mental health problems are stigmatized in our society, so the best thing you can do to help a friend is to be a good, supportive, non-judgmental listener if they choose to talk to you. If you are hesitant to discuss difficulties you may be facing with a close friend or family member, think about other people in your life, like spiritual leaders or campus counselors who would be willing to discuss your struggles.



2. MYTH: Depression is not a *real* medical problem.

FACT: Depression is a real and serious condition. It is no different than diabetes or heart disease in its ability to impact someone's life. It can have both emotional and physical symptoms, making life very difficult for those who struggle with depression. The medical community recognizes it as a disease and acknowledges the seriousness of this condition. While we are still unsure what causes depression, we know that genetic and biological factors play a significant role in its development.

4. MYTH: It only happens when something bad happens in your life:

FACT: While everyone experiences ups and downs in life, and often will feel sad for some time after a serious loss or disappointment, developing depression does not require a specific negative event. Depression can arise suddenly, even when things in life seem to be going well. Prolonged periods of hopelessness, sadness, and lack of interest in things you usually enjoy are some of the symptoms of depression.

6. MYTH: Antidepressants changes your personality.

FACT: The thought of taking medicine that changes brain chemistry can be scary. However, antidepressants are designed to change only certain chemicals that underlie the symptoms of depression, not to change your personality. Most people who take antidepressants are actually happy to feel like themselves again. It is always best to talk with your doctor about the effects that antidepressants or any medications can have.

If at any point you feel so overwhelmed by feelings of sadness and hopelessness that you are considering hurting yourself, you can call:

Counseling Center Emergency Pager 216.207.1092
National Suicide Lifeline 1.800.273.TALK