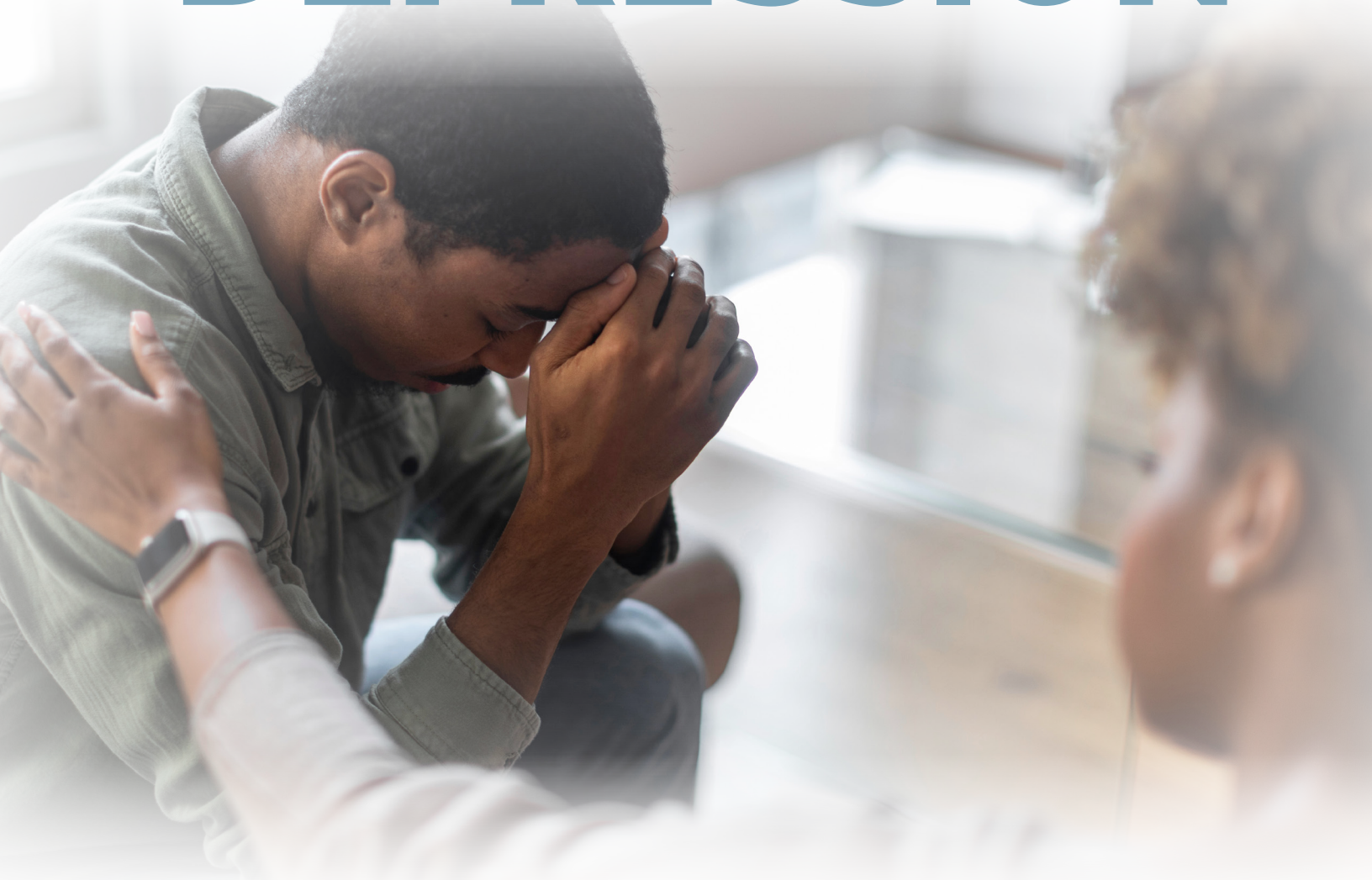


# RECOGNIZING THE **13** WARNING SIGNS OF **DEPRESSION**



**MERIDIAN**  
HEALTHCARE

MENTAL HEALTH

Everyone feels sad at times. However, prolonged sadness, grief, or hopelessness can be more than just the blues. If the emotions you are feeling become too intense and you're struggling to cope with daily life, there may be a deeper issue at hand. Below, we will review several different subtypes and specifiers related to depression diagnoses.

## WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is a mood disorder that affects how a person thinks and feels. The severity of depression can cause disturbances to a person's daily life, impacting their sleep patterns, energy levels, and social relationships. Depression causes feelings of intense sadness and an inability to enjoy life.

Clinical depression, also known as major depressive disorder, is very common. During a 2023 study, Gallup found that [over 36% of women and 20% of men](#) have been diagnosed with depression during their lifetime. Everyone is equally at risk of developing depression, though men are less likely to voice their struggles and seek help, leading to a lower diagnosis rate.

The good news is that depression is manageable with medication and therapy. To be diagnosed with depression, symptoms must be present for more than two weeks. If you notice any of the following warning signs and they persist for more than two weeks, reach out to a mental health care provider.

**Note:** *This guide is not meant to diagnose or provide medical advice. If you need help, please speak to a medical professional. If this is an emergency, call 9-1-1.*

# 13 WARNING SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

1	INTENSE FEELINGS OF SADNESS	One of the more common signs of depression is an intense, prolonged feeling of sadness. This sadness may persist and evolve into an empty, numb feeling. While sadness is a normal reaction to many life events, lingering sadness for a long period of time is a sign to seek help from a mental health professional.
2	LOW ENERGY	Depression often causes fatigue or low energy, making it hard to function. While low energy can be a natural response to a busy life or other medical conditions, substantial low energy without another underlying issue may be the result of depression.
3	LOSS OF INTEREST	Some individuals lose interest in things they once found pleasure in – hobbies, work, and even time with loved ones. This change can result in a struggle to live life to the fullest or feel joy.
4	CHANGES IN SLEEP PATTERN	Depression often affects sleeping patterns, which can mean sleeping too much or sleeping less than usual (or even waking up regularly in the middle of the night). This struggle with insomnia or oversleeping can then make it difficult to get out of bed.
5	CHANGE IN APPETITE	<p>A major change in appetite is definitely something that should be monitored. If you or a loved one are eating more or less than normal, you may be dealing with a common symptom of depression.</p> <p>This change in appetite can eventually affect your weight. A significant weight change, whether that's losing or gaining weight, can be an indicator of a mental health problem.</p>
6	INCREASED IRRITABILITY	Those struggling with depression can be easily frustrated and quick to anger. You may feel irritable or lash out at friends and loved ones.
7	DIFFICULTY CONCENTRATING	Depression makes it hard to focus. If you struggle to focus on tasks, find it difficult to make decisions, or suddenly struggle with poor memory, this may be a sign of depression.

# 13 WARNING SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

8	SELF-LOATHING	Negative self-talk is a common sign of depression. Those with depression may tell themselves that they are worthless or unlovable, but this is the depression talking. These intense feelings can be worked through with a therapist.
9	SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR	If you no longer care about your own safety or well-being and find yourself drawn to self-destructive behaviors, such as substance abuse or reckless driving, this is a sign of depression.
10	BODILY PAIN	An increase in aches and pains in your body may actually be a sign of depression. If you're suffering from an increase in sore muscles, stomach aches, back pain, and headaches not caused by a physical issue, this may be a warning sign of depression.
11	DESPAIR AND HOPELESSNESS	Depression makes people feel hopeless because there is an underlying fear that things will never change. These persistent thoughts bring you down and can make it hard to escape the feeling of despair.
12	ISOLATION	Social anxiety and a desire to isolate yourself are common warning signs of depression. While wanting some alone time is normal and healthy, prolonged periods of isolation and self-imposed loneliness are both signs of compromised mental health.
13	THOUGHTS OF SELF-HARM AND SUICIDE	<p>If you feel a desire to hurt yourself or find yourself thinking about suicide, it is time to reach out to a mental health professional for help.</p> <p>Suicide is a very serious risk factor for depression, especially for someone who remains undiagnosed or who lacks support. If you have suicidal feelings, help is available immediately. Call or text the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by dialing 9-8-8, or visit their <a href="#">website to chat</a>. All talks are confidential.</p> <p><i>*If this is an emergency, dial 9-1-1.</i></p>

Not all types of depression are the same. They last for different periods of time and come with their own warning signs and symptoms.

## TYPES OF DEPRESSION

### **CLINICAL DEPRESSION**

Clinical Depression, also known as Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), is a debilitating and persistent mental health condition characterized by a profound and prolonged feeling of sadness, hopelessness, and a loss of interest or pleasure in most activities. It goes beyond the normal ups and downs of everyday life and can significantly impact a person's thoughts, emotions, and physical well-being.

### **PERSISTENT DEPRESSIVE DISORDER (PDD)**

Persistent Depressive Disorder (PDD), also known as Dysthymia, is a chronic and long-lasting form of depression that lasts for at least two years in adults and one year in children and adolescents. Unlike major depressive disorder, PDD's symptoms are generally less severe but persistently present, affecting a person's ability to function in daily life.

### **SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)**

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that occurs cyclically, typically during the fall and winter months when there is less natural sunlight. SAD is thought to be related to reduced exposure to sunlight, which can disrupt the body's internal clock and affect certain neurotransmitters in the brain.

### **POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION (PPD)**

Postpartum depression is a form of clinical depression that affects some women after giving birth. It typically manifests within the first few weeks or months following childbirth but can occur at any point during the first year postpartum. This condition is characterized by a range of emotional and physical symptoms and difficulty bonding with the newborn.

### **SITUATIONAL DEPRESSION**

Situational depression is a transient and stress-related form of depression that arises in response to specific life events or challenging situations. It is characterized by symptoms similar to those of clinical depression – such as sadness, hopelessness, and changes in sleep and appetite – but is directly linked to a particular stressor, such as a major life change, loss, or trauma. Unlike clinical depression, situational depression typically resolves as the individual adapts or copes with the triggering circumstances, and treatment often focuses on addressing the underlying stressor and providing emotional support during this challenging period.

# WHEN AND HOW TO SEEK HELP

If you have been going through any of the symptoms on this list, you can reach out for help.

The first step is to find a mental health professional you feel comfortable with. They can help you develop a treatment plan involving talk therapy and potentially medication. While there is no cure for depression, treatment options can remove the symptoms of depression and allow you to go back to living a full and happy life.

## FIND HOPE WITH MERIDIAN HEALTHCARE

At Meridian HealthCare, we are here to help you on your journey to better mental health. We're staffed with caring mental health experts who understand that depression is a complex and vulnerable issue. You shouldn't have to suffer these feelings alone. Contact Meridian HealthCare today and find hope with us.

**Call Now: 330-574-4428**



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