

## DEPRESSION

Depression is a very common illness that affects the mind and the body. It is a natural response to stress and tension to feel the “the blues” from time to time. These feelings are usually brief in duration and not usually too overwhelming. Typically emotional support and moral encouragement can prove helpful in these cases. However, with clinical depression the symptoms are more severe and can last for longer periods of time. Millions of people suffer from depression each year yet it is widely misunderstood. Depression is often ignored or untreated because people may not recognize the symptoms, be afraid to appear weak, or feel too depressed to take action. When someone is depressed, everyone involved suffers. When depression is not treated it can disrupt work, family relations, and affect social, emotional, and physical areas of life.

Symptoms vary with intensity from person to person and may include many of the following (you usually will have many of these symptoms but do not need to have them all to be depressed):

- Persistent sad, anxious or “empty” mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness, tearfulness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies, and normal activities including sex
- Poor appetite/weight loss or overeating/weight gain
- Sleeping disorders (including excessive sleeping or lack of sleep)
- Decreased energy, fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Thoughts of death/ suicide, attempts of suicide
- Persistent physical symptoms that don't respond to treatment: headaches, chronic pain, digestive disorders

Some causes for depression are due to side effects of certain drugs, chemical imbalances, and/or heredity. Very often depression can be triggered by a serious loss, chronic illness, difficult relationship, financial problems or any loss, or traumatic changes in life.

### Treatment:

Counseling is a very effective mode of treatment for anyone suffering from symptoms of depression. The emotional, spiritual, social, and vocational needs should be addressed, as they become appropriate. It would be wise to have a physical exam from a medical physician to rule out any medical problems that may be causing the symptoms. If symptoms are left untreated, the depression can become severe with an inability to function at work, home, or with your family. When this occurs, an evaluation with a medical physician or psychiatrist is strongly recommended for medication or other avenues of treatment. Counseling is also strongly recommended to deal with the symptoms and life issues that are causing the depression.

For more information or help, please call:

**MASTERPEACE Center for Counseling and Development**

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