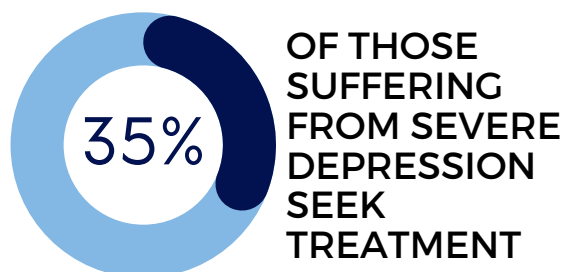


# DEPRESSION AWARENESS MONTH

Depression Awareness Month, observed every October, highlights the widespread impact of depression and the importance of mental health care. This month serves as an opportunity to understand the symptoms, causes, and treatments of depression, reduce stigma, and encourage those affected to seek help. Raising awareness is essential for promoting empathy towards those living with depression, helping to create a more supportive environment. Depression is a serious but treatable condition. Early intervention and access to mental health resources are keys to treatment. Below are facts about depression and its impact.

MAJOR DEPRESSION  
AFFECTS **21M**  
U.S. ADULTS EACH YEAR

Depression is  
**NEVER**  
a "normal" part of life



- **Major depression is one of the most common mental illnesses, affecting more than 8% (21 million) of American adults each year.**
- **15% of youth (3.7 million) ages 12-17 are affected by major depression.**
- **Depression causes people to lose pleasure in daily life, can complicate other medical conditions, and can even be serious enough to lead to suicide.**
- **While certain factors increase the risk of developing depression, it can affect anyone, at any age, and of any race or ethnic group. Depression is never a "normal" part of life, no matter what your demographics or health situation.**
- **While most individuals with depression have a full remission of the disorder with effective treatment, only about a third (35%) of those suffering from severe depression seek treatment from a mental health professional. People often resist treatment because they believe depression isn't serious, that they can treat it themselves, or that it is a personal weakness rather than a serious medical condition.**

*Check out the next page for causes and symptoms of depression.*

Many things can contribute to clinical depression. For some people, several factors seem to be involved, while for others a single factor can cause the illness. Oftentimes, people become depressed for no apparent reason.

## Causes of Depression

**Biological:** People with depression may have too little or too much of certain brain chemicals called "neurotransmitters." Changes in these brain chemicals may cause or contribute to depression.

**Cognitive:** People with negative thinking patterns and low self-esteem are more likely to develop clinical depression.

**Gender:** More women experience depression than men. While the reasons for this are still unclear, they may include the hormonal changes women go through during menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause. Other reasons may include the stress caused by the multiple responsibilities that women have.

**Co-occurrence:** Depression is more likely to occur along with certain illnesses, such as heart disease, cancer, Parkinson's disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, Multiple Sclerosis, and hormonal disorders.

**Medications:** Side effects of some medications can bring about depression.

**Genetic:** A family history of depression increases the risk of developing the illness. Some studies also suggest that a combination of genes and environmental factors work together to increase the risk for depression.

**Situational:** Difficult life events, including divorce, financial problems, or the death of a loved one can contribute to depression.

## Symptoms of Depression

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Sleeping too much or too little; middle of the night or early morning waking
- Weight fluctuations; reduced appetite and weight loss, or increased appetite and weight gain
- Loss of pleasure and interest in activities once enjoyed, including sex
- Restlessness, irritability
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment (such as chronic pain or digestive disorders)
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feeling guilty, hopeless, or worthless
- Thoughts of suicide or death

A quick, easy, and confidential way to determine if you may be experiencing depression is to take a screening. A screening is not a diagnosis, but a way of understanding if your symptoms are having enough of an impact that you should seek help from a doctor or other professional.

## WE CAN HELP.

Our hospital-based outpatient program is designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging or a chronic diagnosis. Anyone can make a referral to our program, including self-referrals, provider referrals, or community consultations.

**Call us today at**