

Depression

Although depression can make you feel alone, 16% of Americans will have it during their lifetime and can affect anyone in varying degrees of severity.

Many other disorders can accompany depression: like substance abuse, eating disorders, schizophrenia, and anxiety disorders.

Women are nearly twice as likely to become depressed as men. However, men are more likely to go undiagnosed and less likely to seek professional help. Men may be more apt to mask their condition with alcohol or drug abuse. Suicide is four times more prevalent in men. Depression may affect the elderly, who have often experienced multiple losses: physical losses, losses in independence and of loved ones. Many older people are reluctant to talk about their symptoms.

Many things can trigger depression. Feelings of depression can be produced by a chemical change that affects the brain's functioning. The brain is made up of billions of neurons that send and receive messages from your body, using neurotransmitters. Neurotransmitters are partially responsible for your emotional state. When these chemical messages aren't delivered correctly between brain cells, depression can emerge.

However, depression has no single cause. Often, it results from a combination of factors. An individual may have no idea why he feels depressed. Whatever its origin, depression is not just a state of mind. Some of the more common factors involved in depression are: Family history, stress, pessimistic personality and physical conditions. These factors can all trigger or cause depression.

Anti-depressant medications are among the most commonly prescribed medications in the United States. Antidepressant medications can improve or completely alleviate a person's symptoms. However, they will not work overnight. Often, the medication regimen must be adjusted periodically for a positive effect. Counseling can often benefit a person suffering from depression.

If you, or someone close to you, suffers from depression, call your EAP professional for referral and counseling at 1-888-244-0680.