



Template Newsletter #4

Depression might be more common than you think

There are 19 million Americans living with depression, and it affects everyone differently. Not all treatment works the same for every person, but with an accurate diagnosis, effective medication, attention to health and wellness, and peer and family support, there is hope for recovery.

If you consistently feel down most of each day and most days for more than two weeks, seek professional help. Below are a few ways people commonly treat depression, and a physician can help decide which way is best for you.

Antidepressants

Antidepressants are medicines that your doctor may prescribe for depression. Medicine can help up to 70 percent of people, especially those experiencing severe depression, or those who have experienced mild or moderate depression for a long time.

If it's the first time you're being treated with medication and you are noticing side effects, don't just stop the medication—call your provider—there may be a number of things that can be done to help. After you start feeling better you should stay on your medicine for at least six to 12 months. If you've been treated with medication before, you may need to stay on it longer.

Never stop taking medicine without contacting your doctor first, even if you're feeling better. There can be bad side effects from suddenly going off some medicines.

Therapy

For many people, talking with a mental health professional is helpful. In fact, therapy is about as effective as medicine for people with mild to moderate depression. Several studies show participating in therapies for a brief period of time helps long after the sessions are over. This is because people learn new ways to think and cope.

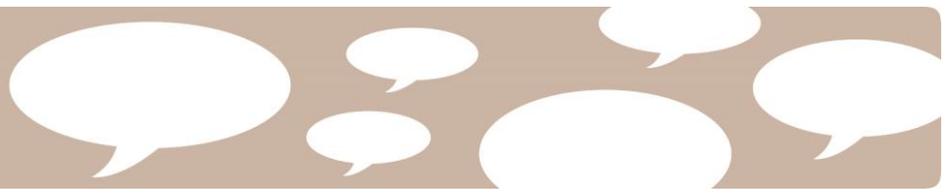
Exercising

Exercise, such as walking or running, has been proven to improve not only physical health, but also the psychological health of patients. It positively changes some of the same chemicals in the brain that are targeted by antidepressant medication, and also improves energy, relieves anxiety and boosts moods.

Exercise helps because it increases the good chemicals in your brain. It improves energy, relieves anxiety and helps you feel empowered. Talk to your doctor about how to start your treatment, and incorporate exercise into your plan.

Support family and friends

One way to support those you know who experience depression or other mental illnesses, is simply by talking to them and acknowledging their illness. Most people live with symptoms of a mental illness for ten years before seeking treatment, largely due to the stigma. Talking about mental illnesses is one way to help show your support and help break down the stigma.



(Depression might be more common than you think, cont.)

Many don't know how to respond when friends and family bring up their struggles with depression, or other illnesses. The good news is that there are resources that can help you, like Make It OK. The website offers tool kits and tips to help guide you on how to talk about mental health. For example, just ask, "What can I do to help?" or say, "I am here if you need me. Find out more at [MakeItOk.org](https://www.MakeItOk.org).

To find more resources about depression and other mental illnesses, (INSERT LOCAL LINK).