

What does Depression look like?

Combating Depression

When faced with overwhelming sadness, tiredness, tearfulness, and loss of joy, it can be hard to imagine a time when things will look different. Depression convinces us, not only that there is no happiness in life, but that it can ever be better. When in this trap of depression, hopelessness can set in. Here are some suggestions for combating depression.

- Monitor your Self Talk – what are you saying to yourself about yourself? Is your self-talk filled with overgeneralizations, blaming, labeling? Choose to begin to tell yourself something positive about yourself and your situation.
- Realize that emotions can lie to us. Just because we feel a certain way, does not make it true. Remember the story of Chicken Little-- just because he was scared and thought the sky was falling did not make it so. Ask others you trust for a different perspective on your situation.
- Replace negative thoughts with positive ones. Negative thinking can become a bad habit that is hard to break. By consciously choosing to think about positive things, we can slowly rewire our brains to see the world from a more positive place.
- Get active, get on a regular sleep schedule, and be sure you are eating. When in a dark place, we become more lethargic, more likely to stay in pajamas all day, inclined to nap but also unable to sleep through the night. Getting yourself back on a consistent schedule can combat depressive symptoms.
- Do something with someone. Depression isolates us. We don't feel like doing things. We don't feel like seeing people. Forcing yourself to get out and see loved ones is a proven method for combating depression.
- Set up an appointment with a counselor. A trained professional can listen to your story, explore options, and help you work through your depression without the bias of those close to you.

In some cases depression can lead to thoughts of suicide. If you find thoughts of death coming to mind, seek help immediately. Tell a trusted friend or family member, schedule an appointment with a counselor, or go to the emergency room if you are afraid you cannot keep yourself safe.