

Depression

Most of us have feelings of depression occasionally. This is a normal response to a particular event such as the passing of a loved one. If the depression occurs without any apparent cause, deepens, and persists, it may be a symptom of some form of mental illness.

Since many of us frequently have some form of mild depression, the question that should always be asked is: are these feelings normal or a warning? Most times all that is needed when these feelings come our way is reassurance that our world is not coming to an end.

Although depressive illness is difficult to handle, the outlook is good for most sufferers, provided they are given appropriate treatment and counsel. Hospitalization is only infrequently necessary and most make very good recoveries.

Symptoms vary with the severity of the illness. In a person with mild depression, the main symptoms are anxiety and a variable mood. Sometimes he or she has fits of crying for no apparent reason. Persons with a more serious depression may suffer from loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, inability to enjoy social activities, feelings of fatigue and loss of concentration.

Severely depressed people may have thoughts of death and/or suicide, accompanied by feelings of guilt or worthlessness.