

October is National Depression & Mental Health Screening Month

# Stop depression in its tracks

Life is full of changes. It is common to get the blues or go through a difficult phase however, depression is more than just feeling sad. It is a serious mental health condition that requires understanding and professional help.

## Know the symptoms

Depression can have different symptoms depending on the person, but in most people, a depressive disorder changes how they function day-to-day, and usually for more than two weeks.

Learn the **FACTS**:

- **Feelings:** Being extremely sad and hopeless, losing interest or enjoyment from most daily activities.
- **Actions:** Exhibiting restlessness or feeling that moving takes great effort, having difficulty focusing concentrating on things or making decisions.
- **Changes:** Gaining or losing weight due to changes in appetite, changing sleep patterns, experiencing body aches, pain or stomach problems.
- **Threats:** Talking about death or suicide, attempting suicide or self-harm.
- **Situations:** Experiencing traumatic events or major life changes, having a medical problem or family history of depression.

## Take action

If someone says they feel depressed, your support and encouragement can play an important role in their recovery. Depression is often treatable.

- **Ask:** "When did you start to feel that way?" "Did something happen that made you feel that way?" Being supportive involves listening and offering encouragement and hope.
- **Stay calm:** If your family member or friend is in a crisis, it's important to remain calm. Listen to their concerns and make them feel understood—then find a way to get them help.
- **Be there:** Speak honestly and kindly. Tell them you care. Listen carefully and learn what they are thinking and feeling.
- **Help them connect:** Offer to help them find a doctor and go with them on the first visit. Suggest that they make a list of symptoms and ailments to discuss at the appointment.
- **Stay connected:** Ask your loved one to join you on a walk, see a movie with you or work with you on a hobby or other activity they previously enjoyed.

Baystate  Health

WorkLife and EAP Support  
**1-800-888-6332**

*If you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of depression, call your program for helpful resources.*

Sources: NAMI.org, NIMH.NIH.gov