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Wellness Wire

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Published by CARE's *WorkLife Solutions* to help employees with life management issues.

Depression and You

All of us feel sad at one time or another. Most sadness is “situational” following a depressing event such as the death of a loved one. Sometimes though, the sadness continues and turns into “clinical depression”. Sadness lasts for a few days or weeks. Depression occurs when you experience a prolonged period of sadness that interferes with your ability to function normally. Depression occurs because of an imbalance of chemicals in the brain. There are several neurotransmitters found in the brain that are important for maintaining normal mood. When these chemicals get out of balance or become depleted, depression can result and may require treatment. Research into the cases of depression are still ongoing but we do know that there are several factors that can increase the risk of a person developing depression that are both genetic and environmental in nature such as family history, social pressures and developmental challenges. It is important to note that many people with risk factors never do develop this illness. Sometimes, although not always, a stressful event might cause a person who is inclined to depression to develop an episode. As time goes on, with frequent episodes of illness, depression may be caused by relatively mild stressors or with no stressor present at all. Fifteen percent of untreated cases of depression can become so debilitating it leads to suicide. That is why it is very important to reach out for help if you feel sad or depressed for a prolonged period of time.

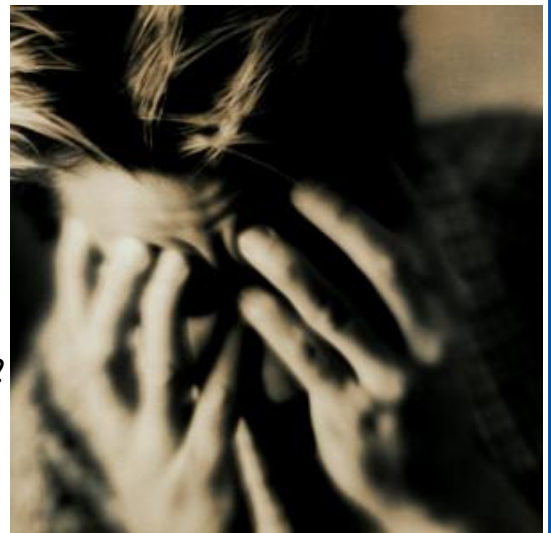
To help find out if you or someone you love is suffering from this treatable illness take the test below. The sooner you know, the sooner you can get help.

References; about.com, depressiontreatment.com, suicide.org

Depression Self Test

To determine whether you may benefit from treatment for depression, answer the following questions completely and honestly.

- 1) Have you stopped participating in activities that interest you?
- 2) Do you feel a sense of helplessness or hopelessness?
- 3) Have you experienced a loss of energy recently?
- 4) Do you feel a sense of worthlessness?
- 5) Have you experienced a decrease in your appetite?
- 6) Have you recently lost or gained a significant amount of weight?
- 7) Have you experienced disturbances in your sleep patterns?
- 8) Do you find yourself isolating from others?
- 9) Do you find that you have difficulty concentrating?
- 10) Do you find that you have difficulty making decisions?



The more “yes” answers, the greater the likelihood that depression is present.
For FREE and confidential help call CARE's *WorkLife Solutions*.

Live Life to the Fullest

Too often we live life as if we were robots. Moving through life like a ritual. Eat, sleep, work; eat, sleep, work, over and over again. That is fine, until you look back at your life and have regrets. You start to wonder where was the fun? Why didn't I devote more to myself or the people around me? You see your children go off to college and wonder what kind of quality time have you truly spent with them. These questions prevent you from feeling as if you are living life to the fullest. Below is just a small list of things to consider. Some are common sense reminders and others you may not have thought of.

- ♦ **Love.** Fall in love. If you have already, fall in love all over again. Love your romantic partner, love your family members, friends, anyone. Open your heart to someone and see how that feels.
- ♦ **Take chances.** Tell your boss about a new idea. The worst that will happen is she will say no. What if the answer is yes? You will never know the outcome unless you take that chance.
- ♦ **Get outside.** Don't stuff yourself indoors all day. Get out and breath some fresh air. Take a walk on your lunch break, build a snowman or go ice-skating.
- ♦ **Turn off the TV.** Too often we spend our family time or alone time watching TV. Think outside the box. Break out those old board games. Sit and read that book your co-worker told you about or read with your children. If you really enjoy watching TV create a movie night with friends or family.
- ♦ **Travel.** Find a way to take a trip. It could be for a week or just for a day. There is so much out there to see and do if you just take the time to think about it.
- ♦ **Rediscover what's important.** Make a list of things that are important to you. Then add to the list everything you would like to do in life. Once that is done cut that list down to the five most important. This is what matters to you. Now start focusing your life on these things. Make time for them. Commit.

If you find these things useful, put them into action today. There are so many things in life to do and enjoy. Make a commitment to yourself to find out what you really want, then go for it!

CARE's WorkLife Solutions (Formerly CARE's Employee Assistance Center)

We Can Help!

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Marital Tension - Elder Care
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Grocery Shopping 101 (courtesy of bankrate.com)

- The highest markup items on the shelves are at about chest level. Reach up or kneel down to select the cheaper house or generic brands.
- Shop early in the day. You get through the store faster with your list and spend less.
- Avoid shopping for food when you're hungry; you'll buy more.
- Log on to your supermarket's online home page for coupons.
- Call the toll-free numbers on your favorite products' labels and tell the customer-service rep how much you enjoy them. Some reps will offer cents-off (or even free) coupons for the product itself; if not, ask.
- Try for triple plays. That's when you use a manufacturer's coupon and a store's own coupon to buy an item on sale.
- Avoid purchasing non-grocery items, such as painkillers, contact lens solution, etc., at a grocery store. You usually pay more.
- Request price matching. Find a store in your area that will honor all competitors' ads. You'll save money, time and gas.