



BalanceWorks® Newsletter

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Depression

We all experience “the blues” from time to time and stress is a common aspect in adults’ lives, but when feelings of sadness and helplessness last for more than a few days, depression may be the culprit. Millions of Americans are currently struggling with depression, many of whom have not sought help for their daily challenges.

According to an annual study by the American Psychiatric Association, 7 percent of Americans are diagnosed with depression each year, with women making up over 2/3 of that group. The Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) further supports this figure, claiming that each year over 16 million adults face at least one major depressive episode. As these statistics refer only to those who seek support and diagnosis, it is believed that the number of American adults currently suffering from depression is much higher.

One reason depression goes undetected and undiagnosed lies in

the “creeping” nature of the disorder. Unlike physical ailments such as the flu, depression can gradually become apparent weeks, months, and even years after the initial trigger has occurred. Though some sufferers may be able to pinpoint a specific event or situation that led to their feelings and symptoms, such as the end of a relationship or loss of a job, many individuals cannot identify when or why their feelings of sadness began.

A lack of diagnosis may also stem from mental health stigmas that categorize depression as a “normal” part of adulthood. This belief is both misguided and damaging to those struggling with the disorder, as depression must be treated properly for the individual to experience relief. As depression is extremely individualized, no “one-size-fits-all” treatment exists. Instead, the path to successful depression management begins with seeking professional support. Common methods for treatment of depression range from short-term, goal oriented counseling, such as the support offered through an

For more information or support on depression contact the work/life experts at **BalanceWorks®** by calling:

1.800.327.2255

eni’s BalanceWorks® program is a confidential 24/7 service provided by your employer to help achieve work/life balance.



Employee Assistance Program, to anti-depressant medications prescribed by a physician.

Depression comes in many forms and affects each individual differently, causing a variety of symptoms and appearances. Being aware of common symptoms, though, may help family and friends to recognize an issue within themselves, or approach a loved one and help them seek the support they need.

Common symptoms of depression include:

- Overwhelming sadness or helplessness.
- Loss of interest in usual activities and interactions.
- Dramatic decrease or increase in appetite.
- Insomnia or constant fatigue.
- Excessive feelings of pessimism and guilt.
- Recurrent thoughts of death and even suicide.
- Cognitive difficulties such as a diminished ability to think, concentrate, or make decisions.
- Physical symptoms such as sudden migraines, digestive disorders, and chronic pain.

If any of the above symptoms are experienced for more than two weeks and appear to worsen, depression may be the cause.

Holiday stressors, from financial concerns to relationship issues, may lead to increased symptoms of depression, while the winter months may also trigger a seasonal form of depression called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Believed to be related to shorter days and minimized sunlight, SAD can intensify common stressors and strengthen depression symptoms.

While depression is a disorder that cannot simply be prevented, heightened self-awareness may make it easier to seek help. To prepare for the winter months and holiday season, individuals should remain aware of mood shifts, changes in diet and sleep schedule, and level of interest in activities and events they usually enjoy. Keep in mind that grief and the occasional “blues” are healthy reactions to daily stressors and life events, but constant feelings of helplessness or anger may require professional support.

If you believe you or your spouse may be suffering from depression, eni’s highly qualified Intake Specialists are available 24/7 to offer guidance toward the path of depression diagnosis, treatment, and management.

Don’t let the warmth of the holidays be overshadowed by feelings of despair. Support is always available and depression is manageable!

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