

What is depression?

Depression (major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Depression can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease your ability to function at work and at home. Justice-involved individuals are at increased risk for depression, with some estimates noting that 25% of those incarcerated experience major depression compared to approximately 7% of people on the outside.

 Symptoms of a Depressive Episode			
depressed mood	loss of interest or pleasure	significant weight change	diminished concentration
sleep difficulties	fatigue nearly every day	feelings of worthlessness	recurring thoughts of death
Symptoms must cause significant distress.		Symptoms must last for at least two weeks.	

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There are several effective treatments available for depression.

- If you have thoughts of death or suicide you can call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): CBT is a form of therapy focused on problem solving in the present. CBT helps you develop a strong foundation of day-to-day behaviors (e.g., taking medication, exercise, scheduling, self-care; this is called *behavioral activation*). It also helps you recognize negative thinking with the goal of changing thoughts (this is called *cognitive restructuring*) and behaviors to respond to challenges in a more positive manner.



- Medication: Brain chemistry may contribute to your depression. Antidepressants might be prescribed to help.
- Research shows that the combination of medication and therapy is most effective.