

# When Someone Needs Help?



## Everyone Needs a Little Help Now and Then

### Mental Disorders Are Common in the United States and Internationally

- 26% of Americans ages 18 & older (1 in 4 adults) suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder yearly.
- 6 % (1 in 17) suffer from a serious mental illness.
- 45% of those with any mental disorder suffer from more than one mental disorder at a given time.
- 5% of commercially insured members use behavioral health benefit coverage.

**Depression** can strike anyone regardless of age, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, or gender.

Depression is about twice as common in women as in men: 12% of women and 7% of men. Symptoms include:

- ✓ Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" feelings
- ✓ Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- ✓ Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- ✓ Irritability, restlessness
- ✓ Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex
- ✓ Fatigue and decreased energy
- ✓ Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- ✓ Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- ✓ Overeating, or appetite loss
- ✓ Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- ✓ Somatic complaints - aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment

**Anxiety Disorders** affect about 40 million American adults age 18 years and older (about 18%) in a given year.

Anxiety disorders last at least 6 months and can get worse if not treated. Symptoms include:

- ✓ Filled with fearfulness and uncertainty.
- ✓ Worries excessively about a variety of everyday problems.
- ✓ Anxiety is more intense than the situation warrants.
- ✓ Inability to relax, easily startled, and difficulty concentrating.
- ✓ Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep.
- ✓ Fatigue, headaches, muscle tension, muscle aches, difficulty swallowing, trembling, twitching, irritability, sweating, nausea, lightheadedness, having to go to the bathroom frequently, feeling out of breath, and hot flashes.
- ✓ Can function socially and hold down a job with mild anxiety.
- ✓ Difficulty carrying out the simplest daily activities if their anxiety is severe.
- ✓ Somatic complaints - aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems that do not ease even with treat.

### To Help A Friend Or Relative

- Offer emotional support, understanding, patience and encouragement.
- Engage your friend or relative in conversation, and listen carefully.
- Never disparage feelings your friend or relative expresses - point out realities & offer hope.
- Notice comments about suicide - report them to your friend's or relative's therapist or doctor.
- Invite your friend or relative out for walks, outings and other activities. Keep trying if he or she declines, but don't push him or her to take on too much too soon.
- Remind your friend or relative that with time and treatment, the depression/anxiety will lift.

### References

NIMH (2009). Depression. Found at <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression/>  
NIMH (2009). Anxiety. Found at <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/anxiety-disorders/>