

Depression and Suicide Overview

Depression

Depression is the most prevalent mental health disorder. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), 9.5% or 20.9 million American adults suffer from a depressive illness in any given year. Common symptoms of depression include:

- Depressed mood (e.g. feeling sad or empty)
- Lack of interest in previously enjoyable activities
- Significant weight loss or gain, or decrease or increase in appetite
- Insomnia
- Agitation, restlessness, irritability
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, guilt
- Inability to think or concentrate, or indecisiveness
- A family history of depression

Less than 25% of individuals with depression receive adequate treatment. If left untreated, depression can lead to a number of other physical and mental health issues.

Suicide

In 2007, suicide was the 11th leading cause of death in the U.S. Suicide rates among youth (ages 15-24) have increased more than 200% in the last fifty years. The suicide rate is also very high for the elderly (age 85+). Suicide occurs across ethnic, economic, social and age boundaries.

Suicide is preventable. Most suicidal people desperately want to live; they are just unable to see alternatives to their problems. Most suicidal people give definite warning signals of their suicidal intentions, but others are often unaware of the significance of these warnings or unsure what to do about them. Talking about suicide does not cause someone to become suicidal.

The Link between Depression and Suicide

About 2/3 of people who commit suicide are depressed at the time of their deaths. The risk of suicide in people with major depression is about 20 times that of the general population. About 7 out of every hundred men and 1 out of every hundred women who have been diagnosed with depression in their lifetime will go on to commit suicide. People who have a dependence on alcohol or drugs in addition to being depressed are at greater risk for suicide.

The Warning Signs

A suicidal person may:

- Talk about suicide, death, and/or no reason to live
- Be preoccupied with death and dying
- Withdraw from friends and/or social activities
- Have a recent severe loss (esp. relationship) or threat of a significant loss
- Experience drastic changes in behavior

- Lose interest in hobbies, work, school, etc
- Prepare for death by making out a will (unexpectedly) and final arrangements
- Give away prized possessions
- Have attempted suicide before
- Take unnecessary risks; be reckless, and/or impulsive
- Lose interest in their personal appearance
- Increase their use of alcohol or drugs
- Express a sense of hopelessness
- Have a history of violence or hostility
- Have been unwilling to “connect” with potential helpers

BE AWARE OF FEELINGS, THOUGHTS, AND BEHAVIORS

People in the midst of a crisis often perceive their dilemma as inescapable and feel an utter loss of control. Frequently, they may feel they:

- Can't stop the pain
- Can't think clearly
- Can't make decisions
- Can't see any way out
- Can't sleep, eat or work
- Can't get out of the depression
- Can't make the sadness go away
- Can't see the possibility of change
- Can't see themselves as worthwhile
- Can't seem to get control

*If you or anyone you know are experience the feelings or behaviors above help is available. WellLife EAP offers free counseling services to all DTE Energy employees and their household members. **Call 888.327.4347. In case of an emergency call 313.468.2000.***

