



Living Your Life While Suffering From **DEPRESSION**

By Stacy Andrews —

Life is full of ups and downs, but when you feel sad, empty, or hopeless most of the time for at least two weeks or those feelings keep you from your regular activities, you may have depression. Depression is a mental health illness when someone feels sad (including crying often), empty, or hopeless most of the time (or loses interest in or takes no pleasure in daily activities) for at least two weeks. Depression affects a person's ability to work, go to school, or have relationships with friends and family. Depression is one of the most common mental health conditions in the United States. It is an illness that involves the body, mood, and thoughts. It can affect the way you eat and sleep, the way you feel about yourself, and the way you think about things.

It is different from feeling “blue” or “down” or just sad for a few hours or a couple of days. Depression is also different from grief over losing a loved one or experiencing sadness after a

trauma or stressful event. It is not a condition that can be willed or wished away. People who have depression cannot just “pull themselves” out of it.

There is no single cause of depression. Also, different types of depression, such as psychotic, postpartum, seasonal affective disorder, and bipolar depression, may have different causes. There are many reasons why a woman may be suffering from depression:

Family history. Women with a family history of depression may be more at risk. But depression can also happen in women who don't have a family history of depression.

Brain changes. The brains of people with depression look and function differently from those of people who don't have depression.

Chemistry. In someone who has depression, parts of the brain that manage mood, thoughts, sleep,

appetite, and behavior may not have the right balance of chemicals.

Hormone levels. Changes in the female hormone's estrogen and progesterone during the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, postpartum period, perimenopause, or menopause may all raise a woman's risk for depression. Having a miscarriage can also put a woman at higher risk for depression.

Stress. Serious and stressful life events, or the combination of several stressful events, such as trauma, loss of a loved one, a bad relationship, work responsibilities, caring for children and aging parents, abuse, and poverty, may trigger depression in some people.

Medical problems. Dealing with a serious health problem, such as stroke, heart attack, or cancer, can lead to depression.

Pain. Women who feel emotional or physical pain for long periods are much more likely to develop depression. The pain can come from a chronic (long-term) health problem, accident, or trauma such as sexual assault or abuse.

Talk to someone like a doctor, nurse, psychiatrist, mental health professional, or social worker about your symptoms if you believe you may be suffering from depression. Diagnosis of depression includes a healthcare professional asking questions about your life, emotions, struggles, and symptoms. They may order lab tests on a sample of your blood or urine and do a regular checkup to rule out other problems that could be causing your symptoms. Never suffer in silence. Get help today!