Depression, Adolescent and Adult

Depression is a true and treatable medical condition. In general there are two kinds of depression:

- Depression we all experience in some form. For example depression from the death of a loved one, financial distress or natural disasters will trigger or increase depression.
- Clinical depression, on the other hand, appears without an apparent cause or reason. This depression is a disease. Depression may be caused by chemical imbalance in the body and brain or may come as a response to a physical illness. Alcohol and other drugs can cause depression.

DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis of depression is usually based upon symptoms and medical history.

TREATMENT

Treatments for depression fall into three categories. These are:

- **Drug therapy.** There are many medicines that treat depression. Responses may vary and sometimes trial and error is necessary to determine the best medicines and dosage for a particular patient.
- **Psychotherapy,** also called **talking treatments,** helps people resolve their problems by looking at them from a different point of view and by giving people insight into their own personal makeup. Traditional psychotherapy looks at a childhood source of a problem. Other psychotherapy will look at current conflicts and move toward solving those. If the cause of depression is drug use, counseling is available to help abstain. In time the depression will usually improve. If there were underlying causes for the chemical use, they can be addressed.
- **ECT (electroconvulsive therapy)** or **shock treatment** is not as commonly used today. It is a very effective treatment for severe suicidal depression. During ECT electrical impulses are applied to the head. These impulses cause a generalized seizure. It can be effective but causes a loss of memory for recent events. Sometimes this loss of memory may include the last several months.

Treat all depression or suicide threats as serious. Obtain professional help. **Do not wait to see if serious depression will get better over time without help. Seek help for yourself or those around you.**

In the U.S. the number to the National Suicide Help Lines With 24 Hour Help Are:
1-800-SUICIDE
1-800-784-2433

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