

Debriefing

Depression is a condition that can occur for many reasons, including workplace, school, or relationship stressors, traumatic life events, discrimination, as well as physical/biological imbalances. Approximately 10-15% of people will suffer some degree of depression during their lifetime. With advances in modern medicine, most people can readily be treated for this illness, which if unattended can be long lasting and affect many aspects of one's life.

The symptoms of depression include:

- Poor or depressed mood, or a reduction in the pleasure gained from otherwise positive experiences
- Sleep disturbances
- Eating disturbances (loss of appetite, or overeating despite not being hungry), which may be linked to weight changes
- Lack of sexual interest
- Fatigue and lethargy (you don't feel like doing anything)
- An inability to focus (e.g., you have a hard time reading)
- Reduced interactions with family and friends
- Thoughts of suicide

Someone who is depressed may experience several (3-4), but not necessarily all of the above symptoms. It is likewise the case that 60% of individuals will encounter a severe traumatic event in their lives and of these people, a fair number will develop symptoms that cause severe anxiety. Illnesses of this nature, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can be treated. Once again, if unattended, the repercussions can be severe.

Symptoms include:

- Hyperarousal (e.g., feelings of anxiety and reactivity even to minor situations)
- Intrusive thoughts (memories of the event come into your head frequently)
- Avoiding thoughts or stimuli related to the event

These symptoms can persist for more than a month following the event and influence your day-to-day functioning.

If you are not already receiving help for this problem, it is suggested that you contact your family physician. It is not a good idea to allow problems to fester, as ruminating over these problems will typically not make them go away. Your family physician or counsellor will usually be able to help you or to refer you to someone who can. If you do not have a family physician, then you can contact either of the following:

- Mental Health Crisis Line:
 - within Ottawa (613) 722-6914
 - outside Ottawa 1-866-996-0991, Web Site: <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Ottawa Distress Centre: (613) 238 1089, Web Site: www.dcottawa.on.ca
- Carleton University Health Services (613) 520-6674
- University of Ottawa Health Services: (613) 564-6627

Above information obtained from Carleton Office of Research Ethics:

<https://carleton.ca/researchethics/policies-and-resources/suicidal-thoughts-protocol-for-use-in-research-settings/>