



### Diagnosis

To be diagnosed with depression, a person must have experienced a major depressive episode that has lasted longer than two weeks. The symptoms of a major depressive episode include:

- Loss of interest or loss of pleasure in all activities
- Change in appetite or weight
- Sleep disturbances
- Feeling agitated or feeling slowed down
- Fatigue
- Feelings of low self worth, guilt or shortcomings
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Suicidal thoughts or intentions

Diagnosing depression can be complicated because a depressive episode can be part of bipolar disorder or another mental illness. How a person describes symptoms often depends on the cultural lens they are looking through. Research has shown that African Americans and Latinos are more likely to be misdiagnosed, so people who have been diagnosed with depression should look for a health care professional who understands their background and shares their expectations for treatment.

### Treatment

Although depression can be a devastating illness, it often responds to treatment. The key is to get a specific evaluation and a treatment plan. Today, there are a variety of treatment options available for people with depression:

- **Medications** including antidepressants, mood stabilizers and antipsychotic medications.
- **Psychotherapy** including cognitive behavioral therapy, family-focused therapy and interpersonal therapy.
- **Brain stimulation therapies** including electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) or repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS)
- **Light therapy**, which uses a light box to expose a person to full spectrum light and regulate the hormone melatonin.
- **Exercise**
- **Alternative therapies** including acupuncture, meditation and nutrition.
- **Self-management strategies and education**
- **Mind/body/spirit approaches** such as meditation, faith and prayer.

Though depression cannot be cured, it can be treated effectively.

**SOURCE:** <http://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Depression#sthash.1aZhm3ZL.dpuf>



# New York State

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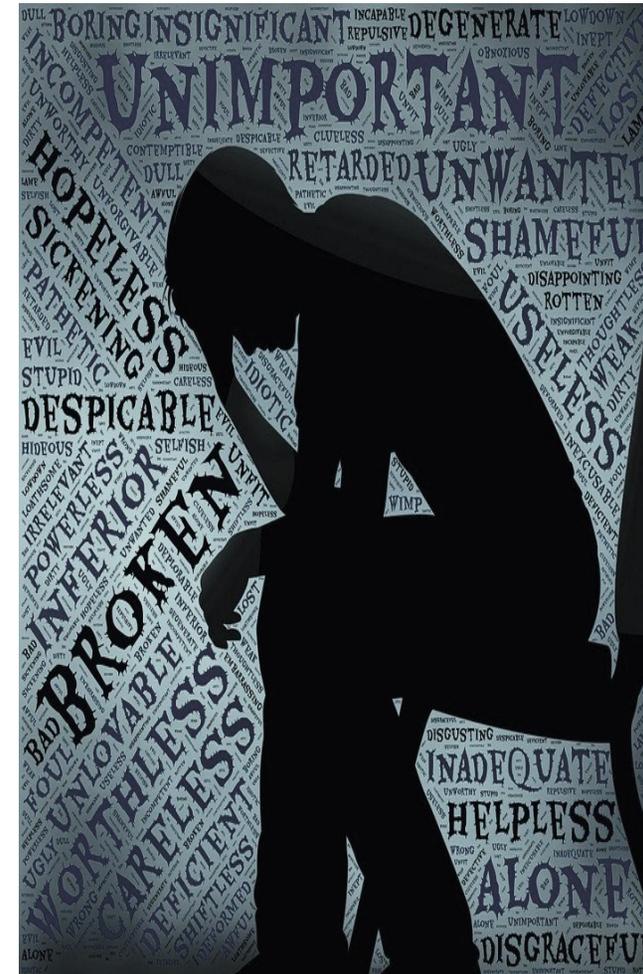
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# DEPRESSION



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