

Did You Know?

What do these college students have in common?

<p>When I took a part-time job and started living off-campus, my course work fell apart. I couldn't concentrate or sleep, and I was always IRRITABLE and angry. - Leah, sophomore year</p>	<p>I've always been anxious and never had much confidence. College was harder than I expected, and then my parents divorced, which was traumatic for me. After a while, all I did was cry, sleep, and feel waves of panic. - Marta, freshman year</p>	<p>After two years of straight A's, I couldn't finish assignments anymore. I felt exhausted but couldn't sleep, and drank A LOT. I couldn't enjoy life like my friends did anymore. - John, junior year</p>
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They are college students who got depressed, got treatment, and got better.

College offers new experiences and challenges. This can be exciting; it can also be stressful and make you, or someone you know, feel sad. When "the blues" last for weeks, or interfere with academic or social functioning, it may be time to be evaluated by a health or mental health professional.

Types of Depressive Illness

Depressive illnesses come in different forms, the number, severity, and duration of symptoms will vary.

Some symptoms of depression include:

- Sadness, anxiety, or "empty" feelings
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"
- Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities
- Appetite and weight changes (either loss or gain)
- Sleep disturbances (insomnia, oversleeping, waking much earlier than usual)
- Feelings of hopelessness, guilt, and worthlessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, remembering
- Irritability or excessive crying
- Chronic aches/pain not explained by other physical condition

How to Recognize Depression

The first step in defeating depression is recognizing it. It's normal to have some signs of depression some of the time. But five or more symptoms for two weeks or longer, or noticeable changes in usual functioning, are all factors that should be evaluated by a health or mental health professional. And remember, people who are depressed may not be thinking clearly and may need help to get help.

What Causes Depression?

The causes of depression are complex. Very often a combination of genetic, psychological and environmental factors is involved. At times, depression occurs for no apparent reason. Regardless of the cause, depression is almost always treatable.

Common stressors in college life include:

- Greater academic demands
- Being on your own in a new environment
- Changes in family relations
- Financial responsibilities
- Changes in your social life
- Exposure to new people, ideas, and temptations
- Awareness of your sexual identity and orientation
- Preparing for life after graduation

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