

Depression vs. Sadness: How Not To Confuse the Two

Description

It's normal to feel sad from time to time. It's a normal human emotion that can sometimes feel overwhelming. However, sadness is meant to be temporary, which makes it very different from depression. Depression is a long-term illness that can impair the normal functioning of a person's life. To further distinguish sadness and depression from each other, here's more about what you should know.

Symptoms Of Sadness And Depression

Although you might feel sad from time to time, you should be able to laugh and feel comforted once those moments are over. Depression is much different from this and can make it very impossible for you to ever feel happy for a long period of time. To [find out if you have depression](#), here are some of the most common symptoms:

- constant feelings of sadness
- irritability
- fatigue
- changes in sleeping or eating patterns
- difficulty concentrating
- loss of interest in things that used to provide pleasure
- feelings of deep, unwarranted guilt
- physical symptoms, such as headaches or body aches that do not have a specific cause
- feelings of worthlessness
- constant thoughts about death
- suicidal thoughts or actions

The DSM-5 Criteria

Mental health professionals tend to use the [DSM-5 criteria](#) to determine if a person has depression or not. There are nine potential symptoms, the severity of which can differ from person to person.

1. feeling depressed throughout each day on most or all days
2. lack of interest and enjoyment in activities you used to find pleasurable

3. lack of sleep or sleeping too much
4. lack of appetite or eating too much
5. irritability, restlessness, or agitation
6. extreme fatigue
7. unwarranted or exaggerated feelings of guilt or worthlessness
8. inability to concentrate or make decisions
9. suicidal thoughts or actions, or thinking a lot about death and dying

The Risk Factors Of Depression

Although depression occurs in both men and women of any age and any socioeconomic background, some factors come into play that increase the [risk for depression](#).

- low self-esteem
- trauma that takes place early in childhood
- history of alcohol and/or drug abuse
- family history of mental illness
- trouble adjusting to a serious medical condition
- lack of a support system, such as friends, family, or coworkers

Medical Causes of Depression

Depression could also be a side effect of some medications that can alter a person's mood. Some of these medications include:

- corticosteroids
- beta-blockers
- statins to treat high cholesterol
- hormonal medications

You should always speak to your doctor if you've been prescribed any of these medications and start to notice a change in your overall mood. Your doctor might be able to find an alternative or alter your dosage to reduce these side effects.

It is recommended that you speak to a medical professional if you start to experience sadness for longer than two weeks. If you're having suicidal thoughts, then you should seek immediate medical help. You can start receiving professional help, such as therapy and medication, so that can get you

back to feeling like yourself again.

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