

Mental Health Awareness: Mental Health Matters

Taking care of yourself can improve your mental health. Our mental health influences how we think, feel, and behave in daily life. Depression can have a negative effect on your mental health and everyday life. Being aware of your mental health helps with your ability to cope, adapt, and solve problems.



Depression signs and symptoms:

- **Decreased energy:** low energy levels are a common sign of depression
- **Recurring thoughts of death:** Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- **Loss of interest in activities:** Losing interest in once enjoyed hobbies or activities
- **Feeling sad:** Persistent sadness, anxious or “empty mood”
- **Increased fatigue and sleep problems:** Depression often comes with a lack of energy and an overwhelming feeling of fatigue
- **Changes in appetite and weight:** Some people will have an increased appetite, while others will not be hungry and will lose weight

If you have had any of the previously mentioned symptoms for more than two weeks, you might be suffering from depression. No matter the path of treatment you choose, asking for professional help is the first step to getting you back to feeling like yourself again.

Help is available! You do not have to suffer emotional or psychological pain alone. Suicide is a permanent act in response to what are often temporary problems.

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255
- [Suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
- Call 911 immediately if you have thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else

If you have health concerns North Alabama Community Care can help you!

Please call us at 1-855-640-8827. We can help with:

- Finding Community Resources
- Find a doctor who accepts Medicaid
 - Attend doctor appointments
- Help promote a healthy lifestyle

Is this depression?

Depression is different than usual mood fluctuations and short-lived emotional responses to challenges in everyday life. Depression could become a serious health issue and affect your daily life. Depression makes it tough to function and enjoy life. If you are experiencing any thoughts of harming yourself, do not wait to get help. Visit the nearest emergency room or call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255**.

Taking medication for depression

Taking medication for depression can improve mood, sleep, and can you make you feel better all around. People who have been depressed have a higher risk of becoming depressed again. But medication may help prevent depression from coming back and if it returns, treatment will now prepare you. You will know the signs, coping skills, and know where to get help.

The dangers of abruptly stopping antidepressants

Are you feeling better and think you are ready to stop taking your antidepressant? It may seem like you no longer need the medication, but in most cases, it is contributing to your improved feelings. If you feel like stopping your medication due to bothersome side effects remember that it may take trial and error in finding the right medication and dosage. **Do not stop taking the medication until you have consulted your doctor.** Quitting without consulting your doctor can be life-threatening It can trigger withdrawal symptoms and relapse of your depression. If you relapse and start taking an antidepressant again, it can take weeks for the drug to rebalance your mood.

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