

# Dealing with Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)

## TIPS FROM ORGANIZATIONAL SOLUTIONS

The right care, at the right time, for the right outcome.™



MDD is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Fortunately, it is also treatable. Depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease your ability to function at work and at home.

### IS IT SADNESS OR MDD?



Everyone experiences depressed moods because of a change, either in the form of a setback or a loss. The sadness, grief, and depressed feelings that accompany the changes and losses of life are usually appropriate, necessary, and transient, and can present an opportunity for personal growth.

However, depression that persists and results in serious dysfunction in daily life may indicate a depressive disorder that may need to be treated as a medical problem.

The severity, duration, and presence of other symptoms are factors that distinguish normal sadness from a depressive disorder.



### SYMPTOMS OF MDD

Depression symptoms can vary from mild to severe and can include:

- Feeling sad or having a depressed mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Changes in appetite — weight loss or gain unrelated to dieting
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Loss of energy or increased fatigue
- Increase in purposeless physical activity (e.g., inability to sit still, pacing, handwringing) or slowed movements or speech (these actions must be severe enough to be observable by others)
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating, or making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide

For a diagnosis of MDD, symptoms must last at least two weeks and must represent a change in your previous level of functioning

### AID IN YOUR RECOVERY: HOW DEPRESSION IS TREATED

#### GOOD NEWS!



MDD is among the most treatable of mental disorders. Between 80% and 90% percent of people with depression eventually respond well to treatment. Almost all patients gain some relief from their symptoms.

MDD is often treated with medication and psychotherapy. Some lifestyle adjustments can also help ease certain symptoms.

People who have severe MDD or have thoughts of harming themselves may need to stay in a hospital during treatment. Some might also need to take part in an outpatient treatment program until symptoms improve.

## MDD: TREATMENT TYPES



### Medication

Brain chemistry may contribute to an individual's depression and may factor into their treatment. For this reason, antidepressants might be prescribed to help modify one's brain chemistry.

Antidepressants may produce some improvement within the first week or two of use, yet full benefits may not be seen for two to three months. If a patient feels little or no improvement after several weeks, his or her treating physician can alter the dose of the medication or add or substitute another antidepressant.



### Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy, counselling or "talk therapy," is sometimes used alone for treatment of mild depression; for moderate to severe depression, psychotherapy is often used along with antidepressant medications.

### Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

CBT has been found to be effective in treating depression. CBT is a form of therapy focused on the



problem solving in the present. CBT helps a person to recognize distorted or negative thinking with the goal of changing thoughts and behaviors to respond to challenges in a more positive manner.

## CAPABILITIES/RETURN TO WORK

Capabilities are dependent on the individual's level of mental alertness and whether a comorbid anxiety disorder is present. Work tasks that are familiar, simple, and do not require intense concentration or multitasking may be appropriate.

In most cases, involvement with work activities is beneficial to recovery. Temporary accommodations may include a flexible schedule to facilitate medical appointments and psychotherapy attendance; periodic rest breaks away from the workstation; and memory aids, organizers, lists, and written instructions to improve concentration.

Generally, work tasks that involve physical activity and exercise are helpful during recovery.



## ONLINE RESOURCES

American Psychiatric Association

MD Guidelines

Healthline