



## Health Services

# University of Oklahoma Student Affairs

Hours: 8 a.m.–6 p.m.  
Telephone: 405 325-4611, Fax: 405 325-7065  
Web: <http://goddard.ou.edu/healthed>

We pledge to treat you with dignity and respect and to provide you with competent and compassionate therapeutic services.

**Charles B. Goddard Health Center**  
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For more information contact OU Counseling and Testing Services at 325-2911 or 325-2700.

### References

[www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov) [National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)]  
[www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org) (Depression Alliance)  
[www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com) (Mayo Clinic)  
[www.depression.org](http://www.depression.org) (National Foundation for Depressive Illness, Inc.)



## depression

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#### What is Depression?

Depression is an illness that involves the body, mood, and thoughts. It affects the way an individual eats, sleeps, thinks, and feels about oneself. Depression is a medical disorder that can have a chemical or otherwise biological basis.

#### What Are the Causes of Depression?

Depression can be caused by a number of different factors. Some of the factors that may contribute to depression include:

- Heredity
- Stress
- Changes in life patterns and environment
- Environmental factors
- Illness
- Certain personality traits (e.g., low self-esteem, pessimism)
- Postpartum period in men and women
- Alcohol, nicotine, and/or drug abuse

#### What Are the Symptoms of Depression?

Not every individual will experience the same symptoms of depression. An individual may experience a few or many symptoms that may range from mild to severe. Some common symptoms include:

- Constant sad and/or anxious mood
- Loss of interest in normal daily activities or hobbies
- Feelings of hopelessness, guilt, worthlessness, and/or helplessness
- Sleep disturbances
- Impaired thinking or concentration
- Weight loss or gain
- Decreased energy and/or fatigue
- Irritability, restlessness
- Constant physical symptoms
- Thoughts of death and/or suicide; suicide attempts

#### Who is at Risk for Depression?

Depression may affect all individuals regardless of race or age. However, the following individuals are more likely to become depressed:

- Women (twice as likely as men)
- Individuals who live alone

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- Elderly people
- Individuals who are divorced

#### What is the Treatment for Depression?

The first step in the treatment process should be to obtain a physical examination by a health care provider. Certain medical conditions can cause the same symptoms as depression, so it is important to rule out any underlying physical causes. Once this is done, the health care provider may refer his/her client for a psychological evaluation. The treatment choice will depend on the outcome of the evaluation. Treatment may include:

- Antidepressant medications and/or mood-stabilizing drugs
- Psychotherapy

**Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy** helps an individual change his/her negative styles of thinking and behaviors that are associated with depression

**Interpersonal Therapy** focuses on an individual's personal relationships that may cause and increase depression

**Talk therapy** helps an individual gain insight and resolve his/her problems through verbal exchange

**Behavioral Therapy** helps an individual unlearn behavioral patterns that contribute to depression and obtain satisfaction through his/her actions

- Group Therapy (e.g., stress management, bereavement groups, marital and/or family)
- Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) uses an electrical shock to induce controlled seizures that help treat chemical imbalances in the brain

**Note:** Many cases of depression will require medication as well as psychotherapy to produce the best outcome.

#### What Should One Do if He/She Suspects Depression?

If an individual suspects depression either with him/herself or with a friend or family member it is best to get help as soon as possible. There are many places that can provide treatment services or make a referral. These include:

- Health care providers
- Community mental health providers
- State hospitals
- Social agencies