

HEAL FROM DEPRESSION



Greenwood
Counseling Center

KNOW THE SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

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Everybody feels sad at times in life, and there is nothing more frustrating than to feel bogged down by overwhelming feelings of sadness. But if the sadness continues for a prolonged period of time, then it is good to talk with a mental health professional to be assessed for depression.

There are varying degrees of depression, and when the sadness is low grade and ongoing, it is often diagnosed as dysthymia instead of depression. What is the difference between the two? Dysthymia is often described to feel like there is a dark cloud overhead. It is milder than depression

and is very long lasting. Some of the other symptoms of dysthymia are sense of low self-esteem, difficulty sleeping, avoidance of activities, and lack of energy. Depression on the other hand, involves a wider range of symptoms and symptoms that are more extreme than in dysthymia. When suffering



THRIVE

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from depression one may feel overwhelmingly sad, and have feelings of anger, irritability and loss of interest in normal activities. They may have thoughts of suicide or death, and increased feelings of anxiety, worthlessness and guilt about past experiences.

There are many websites that offer screenings for depression. The reliability of these online assessments are not endorsed by this author but they may provide some direction as to when it may be necessary to seek professional help. Some of the online screenings that are available are listed below:

Psychology Today:

http://psychologytoday.test.s.psychtests.com/take_test.php?idRegTest=1308

WebMD:

<http://www.webmd.com/depression/depression-assessment/>

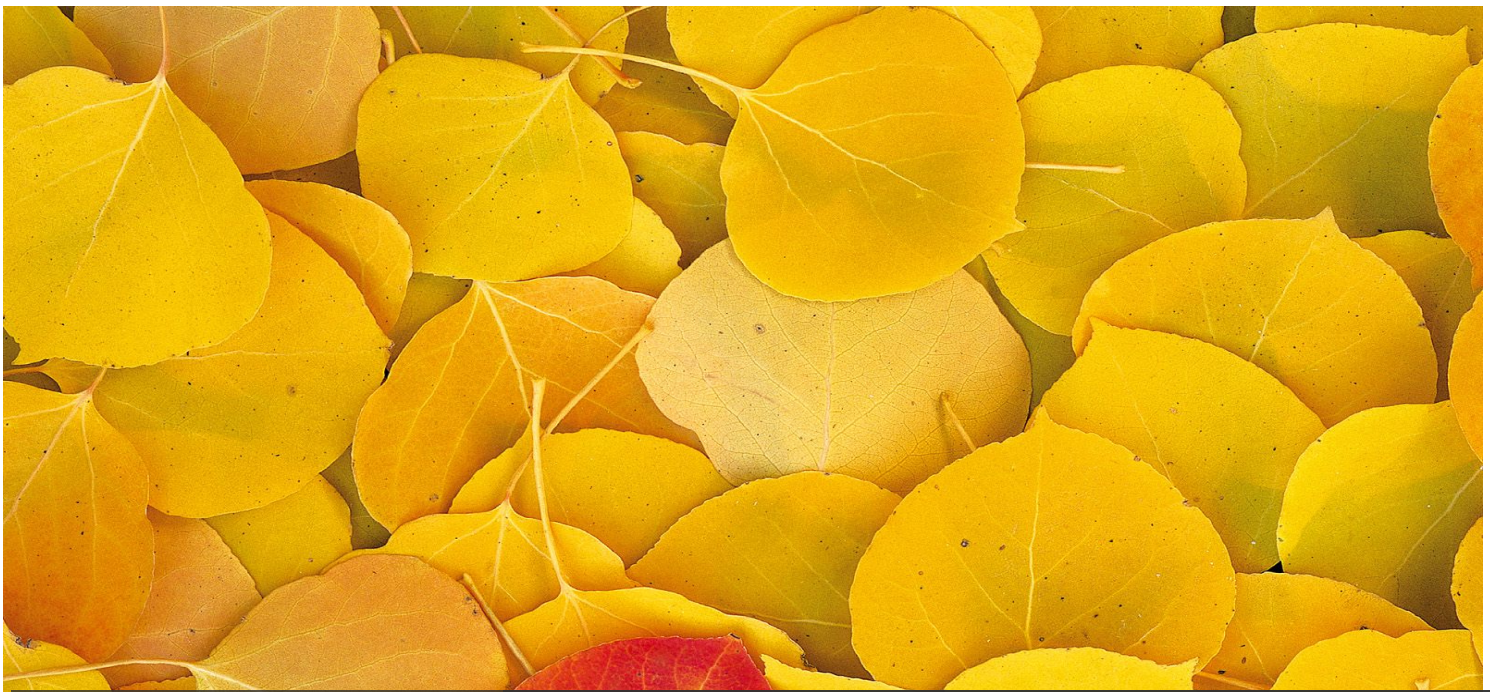
Screening for Mental Health, Inc.:

<http://www.helpyourselfhelpothers.org>

Anxiety and Depression Association of America:

<http://www.adaa.org/iving-with-anxiety/ask-and-learn/screenings/screening-depression>

Depression does not always have an identifiable source, and that is often what makes it so frustrating. It can have environmental or biological roots that in therapy can be identified and treated. Online assessments are a start at helping you to assess the severity of your feelings, but are not an entirely reliable tool for determining if you have depression or dysthymia. Your experience of the feelings is the best measure for whether or not you should seek help. Everyone deserves to feel happiness, and it is attainable with the right treatment. ☼



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THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

We all want to feel happy. However, have you ever considered what the components are for happiness? When you think of happiness, are you thinking of giddiness and joy or do you think of a feeling of contentment? No matter how you perceive happiness, it is something that is found deep within oneself. It is generally not something found in an environment, although that is a contributing factor, but it is predominantly found in an ability to embrace a perspective of hope and adaptive functioning. How that ability develops is complex and born out of biological and environmental factors, but there are some practices that can help to foster healing.

Get in touch with the goodness within yourself:

- Take a few minutes each day to relax, close your eyes, and bring to mind thoughts of warmth and love enveloping you. Breathe that in and breathe out any negative thoughts or feelings. Take those moments to appreciate the unconditional positive love that surrounds you
- At the end of each day, think of something that happened that day for which you were thankful. Keep a list of those things so that you can look back on them.
- Think of times that you successfully

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navigated a situation or frustration. What skills were you using? What quality of your personality was working for you? Try to apply that quality to future scenarios.

productive, get up and move. Clean, do some gardening, organize your home or office. No matter what you choose to do, make it something that requires you to move a little and actively involve yourself in the task.

- When you experience a negative feeling, challenge the belief behind it. Are you making negative assumptions or leaping to conclusions? If you were to assume the very best instead of the worst, how would that change things? How does that affect the way you feel?
- Pay it forward. Every day, make a kind gesture for someone else. Open the door for someone, or buy coffee for someone else in the line. Doing good things for others makes us feel good about ourselves, and could be the fuel for a fantastic day.
- Exercise. Exercise has been proven to not only improve feelings in the moment, but new research has shown that muscle mass contains components that are more evident in mental health and wellness. *(Read the research by going to: <http://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-09-physical-brain-stress-induced-depression.html>)* If you can't exercise, just get busy. Even if you don't feel like doing anything
- Maintain a regular sleep schedule.: Our bodies regulate themselves and operate optimally with routine and rhythm in our sleep schedules. Have a bedtime routine such as a warm bath prior to bed or reading for a bit before you go to sleep. Also, try to go to bed at roughly the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning. If you are lying in bed at night worrying and can't fall asleep, try shifting your thoughts to a hobby of yours that you enjoy. If you like golfing, think about it. If you like reading, think about what you are going to read next. If you like decorating, think about the next project you are looking forward to starting. By engaging in thoughts that we enjoy, we are releasing positive endorphins into our system, which help to mitigate worry. Once your body adjusts to your improved sleep schedule and sleep patterns, you will get a better night's sleep and feel less anxious during the day.
- Practice this calm place exercise: Imagine a place where you feel calm and relaxed. Then, imagine the sights and sounds, smells and feelings of this

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place. Breathe deeply, enjoy the sights and sounds, relax and spend a few minutes there. Doing so can lower heart rate, decrease cortisol levels and increase endorphins, all of which improve the way one feels.

- Speak with a qualified therapist that specializes in treatment of depression. Although there are many tools to cultivate more feelings of hope, there is no replacement for the benefits of speaking with a qualified therapist. Talking through your worries, determining the root of your depression, and engaging in treatment that is proven effective for depression is well worth your time and investment.

At Greenwood Counseling Center we understand how difficult it can be to take the first step toward seeking counseling. We are here to help and answer any questions you might have. Our therapists are experts at helping people navigate through feelings of depression to achieve the happiness they desire.

Call (303)221-1272 to schedule your free 15-minute initial phone consultation and begin your path to healing.



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