



HELPING HANDS



When You or a Loved One is Experiencing Depression

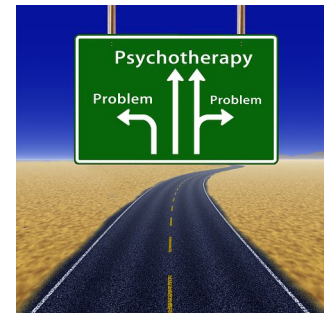
(Excerpts from Rightdirectionforme.com)

What is depression?

Depression is not just about having a bad day. It can be more serious and negatively affect how a person feels, thinks and acts, decreasing their ability to function well at home and at work. Moreover, depression is common, affecting an estimated 16 million Americans (7%) in a given year.

Depression is diagnosed if these symptoms are experienced for more than two weeks:

- 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., handwringing or pacing) or slowed movements and speech (actions observable by others)
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating or making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide



If you feel like you may be experiencing symptoms of depression, it is important that you seek help.

Contact your EAP representative listed on page 2 for assistance

Talking with Your Treating Provider

The therapeutic alliance that you form with your treating provider will help make a positive difference in your care experience and treatment outcomes. That's true whether it is your primary care provider, a psychiatrist or another health care professional. Forming an alliance increases the likelihood that you will be a true partner in developing and carrying out your treatment plan. Start by thinking through what you are experiencing and how you want to feel and function better.

In talking with your provider, start out by identifying what you want to achieve through treatment to feel and function better. As you are developing a treatment plan, here are 10 proposed questions to ask your provider:

1. **Why are you recommending this treatment approach, what is the goal of the recommended treatment and how will it help me feel and function better?**
2. **What changes should I expect to see from the proposed treatment – in how I feel and function – and what is the timeframe for seeing those changes?**
3. **How will you measure and track progress in achieving my treatment goals and desired outcomes?**
4. **What will we do if we do not see improvement, what is our Plan B?**
5. **If medication is prescribed, are there also psychosocial therapies that could be used in combination to help me feel better?**
6. **What are the risks and benefits associated with the recommended treatment (you may not need to ask this question because most providers will share this information)?**
7. **What are the potential side effects of prescribed medication?**
8. **How does the recommended treatment work to alleviate symptoms?**
9. **What is the long-term plan to treat depression?**
10. **Anything else I need to know about treatment for depression?**

Being an active participant in your treatment allows you to take control of your mental health and well-being. The good news is that most people experiencing depression get better with treatment and lead full and productive lives.

Choosing the Right Treatment Provider

Finding the right treatment provider is a critical component to getting effective mental health care that works for you. After deciding to seek mental health treatment, consider the following in your search for the right provider.

Here is a list of the most common providers who treat mental health conditions:

- **Primary Care Providers:** this is where people often start. Sometimes they are known as General Practitioners. They can prescribe medication if it's needed and make referrals to mental health specialists.
- **Psychiatrists:** are doctors who have received advanced medical school training to treat mental health conditions with medications and psychotherapy.
- **Psychologists or Therapists:** they typically have advanced degrees, like a PhD or PsyD. In most states, psychologists are not allowed to prescribe medication, but many work with psychiatrists and medical providers who can do so. Psychologists are trained in therapies that are effective for depression and other mental health conditions like cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) and other talk therapies.
- **Licensed Clinical Social Workers or Social Work Counselors (Counselor):** these providers typically have a Master's degree and provide an assessment, diagnosis, and therapy. They are not licensed to prescribe medication but can work with another provider who can do so.
- Your EAP – please talk with the contact listed below for more information about accessing care.



IAM Peer Employee Assistance Program



Questions to Consider Asking in Finding the Right Provider

I am concerned I may be experiencing depression, what is your experience treating depression?

What specific treatment options are there and how will it help me to feel better?

How long will it take me to feel better? What should I expect in the way I will feel from the proposed medication and/or therapy?

What is your area of expertise in treating mental health conditions?

What are your preferred methods of treatment for mental health conditions and, are they proven effective for my mental health condition?

Do you take my insurance? If not, what is your fee? Is there a sliding scale fee policy?

The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.