



THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY GROUP

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What is Depressive Disorder?

Depression is a “whole-body” illness, involving your body, mood and thoughts. It affects the way you eat and sleep, the way you feel about yourself, and the way you think about things. Depression is not the same as a temporary blue or low mood. It is not a sign of personal weakness or a condition that can be willed or wished away. People with a Depression cannot merely “pull themselves together” and get better. Without treatment, symptoms can last for weeks, months or years. Appropriate treatment, however, can help most people who suffer from Depression.

Symptoms of Depression

Not everyone who is Depressed experiences every symptom listed. Some people experience only a few symptoms, and some people experience many symptoms. The severity of symptoms can also vary between individuals.

Symptoms of Depression include:

- Persistent sad, or “empty” mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed, including sex
- Feelings of hopelessness and pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness and self-reproach
- Insomnia or hypersomnia, early morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain
- Decreased energy, fatigue and feeling run down
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs, may be associated but not a criteria for diagnosis
- Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempts
- Restlessness, irritability, hostility
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain.
- Deterioration of social relationships