



MONTHLY MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

Presented by the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office Mental Health Tasks Force

In this issue:
Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)

What is MDD? It is NOT only sadness...it can also look and feel like some of the following:

- Feelings of emptiness or hopelessness
- Anger, irritability, frustration over even minor issues
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities you once enjoyed
- Insomnia or hypersomnia, fatigue and lack of overall energy
- Reduced appetite and weight loss or overeating and weight gain.
- Anxiety, agitation and restlessness.
- Slowed thinking, speaking, and/or body movement. Trouble making decisions or focusing.
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt, fixation on past mistakes/ failures.
- Frequent or recurrent thoughts of suicide and death.
- Unexplained physical problems, body aches or headaches

Depression myths: *Don't let the myths and stigma trap you in MDD*

- Depression means you are weak
- Depression is not serious...it will go away sooner or later
- A new job or more money will cure depression
- Buying yourself a gift will make it go away
- Depression can only happen when something really bad happens
- Wealthy and/or attractive people don't get depression
- People with depression are easy to spot on sight. They will always look sad
- Depression is only in your mind. It can't hurt your body
- Talking about depression will make it worse
- Anti-depressant medication will cure depression by itself.

Possible Physiological Causes of Depression

- Changes in the function and effect of neurotransmitters and the way they interact with neuro-circuits that are involved in mood stability may play a role in MDD.
- Hormonal changes may cause a triggering of MDD. Hormonal changes may take place due to many different reasons such as pregnancy, thyroid problems, menopause, nutritional deficits and many other reasons.
- Inherited traits. MDD is more common in persons with blood relatives that suffer from MDD. Researchers are searching for genetic links for MDD.

Risk Factors for MDD

- MDD can happen at any age. More women are diagnosed with MDD, but this may indicate the lack of help seeking behavior in men suffering from MDD due to the stigma surrounding mental illness.*
- Risk factors may include but are not limited to the following:*
- Personality traits such as low self esteem*
- Trauma (physical, sexual, loss of loved one, loss job or financial loss*
- Family history of depression, bipolar and suicide*
- History of mental illness such as anxiety, PTSD*
- Substance/alcohol abuse*
- Serious Chronic illness (cancer, stroke, heart disease, chronic pain)*
- Certain prescribed medications (always consult your physician)*

PREVENTION and TREATMENT

- Take steps to control stress, to increase your resilience and boost your self-esteem. Nutrition and exercise play a huge role in combating MDD.
- Reach out to family and friends, especially in times of crisis, to help you weather rough spells.
- Get treatment at the earliest sign of a problem to help prevent depression from worsening.
- Consider getting long-term maintenance treatment to help prevent a relapse of symptoms.

REFERENCES

- The following sources were used in the creation of this Mental Health Newsletter. The G.C.S.O. Mental Health Tasks Force encourages you to utilize these and other sources such as the *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)* to learn more about this important health topic.
- Diagnostic Statistical Manual –V*, American Psychiatric Association, June 2013
- National Institute of Mental Health (2013). Depression. Retrieved March 23, 2021, from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>

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