

Feeling "Blue"? It Could be Depression

Are you feeling "empty" or sad? Have you lost the interest in your daily activities? Are you experiencing difficulty for sleeping or are having unintended weight changes? Are you feeling guilty about things you have no control over, or feeling that you can not handle the stress, or the situations anymore? Do you feel fatigued or like you are in a "fog", Overloaded, or Blue? Everyone feels like this, sometimes. But, if you no longer enjoy activities that you usually like to do, all of these feeling are part of every day and you are becoming insolated, you may have a more serious problem. Being depressed, can change the way you think, you feel. Doctors call this "clinical depression."

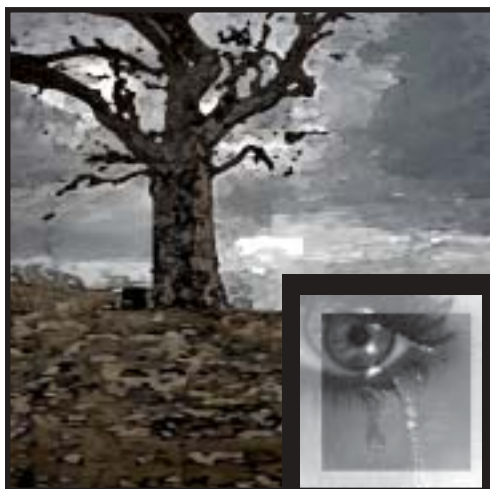
These days, many people are living in uncertain times, and if you can answer yes to one or more of the above questions, you might be clinically depressed.

"Clinical depression is a common medical illness," said Board of Supervisors Vice-Chairwoman Pam Slater-Price. "Clinical depression is a common medical illness affecting more than 19 million American adults each year."

There is no one cause of depression. Depression often strikes people who felt fine but who suddenly find they are dealing with situations out of their control, like a death in the family, being out of job, or with a serious illness. For some people, the changes in the life affect their brain, their mood and cause depression. Sometimes, for some people, a single event can bring on the illness. Events like moving to a new house, or or having a baby, or being under a lot of stress, or under medical treatments, can feel depressed. Others become depressed for no clear reason. People with serious illnesses, such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, Parkinson's disease, and their family caregivers sometimes become seriously depressed.

The good news is that people who are depressed usually feel better with the right treatment. The first step is to accept that you or your family member needs help. Your doctor or mental health expert can often treat your depression successfully.

"Like screenings for other illnesses, such as heart disease or diabetes, depression screenings should be a routine part of



healthcare. This can provide a quick and easy way to spot the first signs of what could become a serious mental illness." said Alfredo Aguirre, San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency's Mental Health Services Director at the kickoff to San Diego Depression Screening Week. "The San Diego Depression Screenings are a collaborative effort which provides both, direct screenings and increase awareness of this condition that so many people suffer from, often in silence due to shame or stigma."

"I encourage County residents who might be suffering in silence to come in and get screened for depression," said HHSA Director Nick Macchione. "Screenings may consist of a written screening test, a discussion of the results with a mental health professional, sharing educational information on depression, and, if necessary, a referral for additional help."



Alfredo Aguirre, San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency's Mental Health Services Director

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, in partnership with the Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP), and volunteers hosted a series of no cost depression screenings during San Diego Depression Screening Week. Trained mental health volunteers were performing depression screening to adults 18 years and older at ten sites around the county. available at most locations to meet with individuals needing immediate intervention or referrals for ongoing help.

Every day, the County has close to 200 contracted or County-operated, publicly funded mental health programs in San Diego. Services include Crisis Residential, outpatient, inpatient, day treatment, full service partnerships, case management, and more," said Aguirre. "Available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, we have a multilingual toll-free Access and Crisis Line, at 1-800-479-3339, where callers can speak to someone about available services."