

## **ARE YOU DEPRESSED?**

More than 17 million Americans suffer from clinical depression at any one time. Although clinical depression is experienced by more women than men, it can strike anyone at any time. It may begin with occasionally feeling “down” or “blue”, but if it continues for a period of weeks or begins to rob you of your energy, your concentration or your pleasure in living, then it is time to seek help.

Clinical depression often goes unrecognized or untreated because we don't generally get as much information on problems that affect our feelings as we do about problems that affect our bodies. In addition to the common symptoms of feeling blue or depressed, it can also appear as persistent and chronic physical ailments, such as backache, stomach problems, anxiety, headaches, etc. Even when someone recognizes they are depressed, they may not know where to turn - or feel it is unacceptable to talk about their problems. A tendency to depression is not a “weakness” or something to be ignored. It is a real condition and can be detected by changes in the brain that affect the way you think and feel.

The good news is that more and more people today are learning that going to a professional for depression or any other problem that seriously or chronically affects you emotionally is easy and effective. It is a great relief to learn that depression and many other life problems and stressors are surprisingly easy to treat. Take a moment to take this screening. If you have experienced five or more of the following symptoms for longer than a month, or if the symptoms are severe enough to interfere with your daily routine, it is time to see a qualified mental health professional.

A persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood.

Sleeping too little or sleeping too much.

Reduced appetite and weight loss or increased appetite and weight gain.

Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed.

Restlessness or irritability.

Persistent physical symptoms that don't respond to treatment, such as headaches, chronic pain, or constipation and other digestive disorders.

Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.

Fatigue or loss of energy.

Feeling guilty, hopeless, or worthless.

Thoughts of death or suicide.