

# Counseling Capsules

An information service from the UTEP Counseling Center  
visit our web site at: <http://sa.utep.edu/counsel/>

## Depression

Everyone feels down at times. The break-up of a relationship or poor grades can lead to low spirits. Sometimes sadness comes on for no apparent reason. Is there any difference between these shifting moods and what is called clinical depression? Anyone who has had an episode of clinical depression would probably answer "yes".

There is growing evidence that clinical depression is partly an illness with a biological basis and that it is more common in individuals whose close relatives have been affected. Psychological and social factors also play a vital role. The loss of a loved one or a disappointment may trigger a depression, as may past losses, a lack of social supports, and the absence of avenues for fulfillment. The duration and depth of despondency and the presence of characteristic symptoms help distinguish clinical depression from ordinary unhappiness.

**If someone experiences most of the symptoms below for more than two weeks, there is a good chance they are suffering from a clinical depression.**

### SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

- Inability to concentrate
- Inability to experience pleasure
- Decreased interest in daily activities
- Increase in self-critical thoughts
- Recurrent thoughts of death and/or suicide
- Increased isolation from others
- Missing deadlines/decreased performance
- Feelings of excessive guilt, helplessness and/or hopelessness
- Difficulties falling or staying asleep
- Sleeping too much
- Feeling fatigued despite adequate sleep
- Decreased appetite and/or pleasure in food
- Changes in personality
- Changes in sexual desire
- Increased alcohol/drug use

### WHAT TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE?

- The UTEP Counseling Center provides students free and confidential evaluation and counseling services.
- In mild cases of depression, friends and family may provide all the support needed.
- In more severe cases, Mental Health Professionals should be consulted.
- People with moderate to severe depression may benefit from antidepressant medications. These medications are prescribed by a medical professional after a thorough evaluation. There is usually a positive effect within a few weeks.
- Taking antidepressant medication does not preclude the need for other forms of treatment. Individual and/or group counseling and psychotherapy is an important treatment component.
- Depressed individuals who are at high risk of suicide may require short-term hospitalization. While this is often seen as a drastic measure, it can be life saving, and it may allow effective treatment to begin.

### **HELP! WHERE TO FIND IT:**

University Counseling Center.747-5302  
202 West Union: 8-7 M-T / 8-5 W-F