

Is it Grief or Depression?

As we get older, we may go through a lot of changes and stressful life events such as the death of a loved one. Grief after the loss of a loved one is a normal reaction. However, grief that lasts a very long time or is unusually severe following a loss may require treatment for depression.

Depression is a medical condition that interferes with daily life and regular function. **It is not a normal part of aging.**

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION?

Depression has many symptoms, both emotional and physical. If you have been experiencing several of the following symptoms for at least two weeks, you may be suffering from depression:

EMOTIONAL

Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood

Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities

Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism

Feelings of guilt, or helplessness

Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts



PHYSICAL

Difficulty sleeping, early morning awakening, or oversleeping

Restlessness and irritability

Uncontrolled appetite and/or weight changes

Decreased energy, fatigue, or being “slowed down”

Aches/pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems with no clear physical cause and/or that do not ease with treatment

HOW DO I GET HELP?

If you think that you or a loved one may have depression, it is important to seek professional help.

The good news is, in most cases, depression is treatable, either with medication, therapy, or a combination of the two. With the right treatment, you may begin to see improvements as early as two weeks from the start of your therapy. Some symptoms may start to improve within a week or two, but it may be several weeks before you feel the full effect.

For more information, talk to your doctor or healthcare provider.

References:

- 1) Older Adults and Depression – National Institute of Mental Health <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/older-adults-and-depression/index.shtml> (accessed Mar 24, 2021)
- 2) Depression – Medbroadcast <https://medbroadcast.com/condition/getcondition/depression> (accessed Mar 24, 2021)