



## More than Just Sadness

When we hear the word depression we often think of a person who is sad, cries a lot or appears lonely. But depression or emotional distress can have other symptoms as well, such as digestive problems or unexplained aches and pains.

Depression can include both emotional and physical symptoms as a result of our own body chemicals. Emotional symptoms are often used to detect depression. But research has shown that physical symptoms are very common and should not be overlooked.

## The Mind-Body Link

The body is made of many nerve pathways sending messages to the brain when we experience pain and various emotions. The spinal cord is the major "road" sending these messages to and from the brain to different organs, nerves and cells in the body. The brain then controls a person's emotions and sensitivity to pain with these natural chemicals found in the body.

If these chemicals are out of balance, a person can feel depressed and experience physical symptoms. Sometimes pain from a pre-existing condition could become worse. The combination of emotional and physical symptoms can interfere with a person's quality of life.

## Make a Plan to Stay Safe

These emotional and physical symptoms can lead us to feel like there is no hope and you may have thoughts of suicide. Remember, you are not alone, though sometimes you may feel like you are. Many people experience these feelings. There are people who can help and support you. For support make a list of the people who care about you and their phone numbers. Include:

- **A close friend, family member or clergy you can trust**
- **The local crisis center**
- **Your doctor or therapist**
- **Your case manager if you have one.**

For more information on depression and treatment, contact:

### Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

phone: 800.826.3632  
web: [www.dbsalliance.org](http://www.dbsalliance.org)

### National Alliance on Mental Illness

phone: 800.950.6264  
web: [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

### Mental Health America

phone: 800.969.6642  
web: [www.mentalhealthamerica.net](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net)

To schedule an appointment, contact your primary care provider:

509.663.8711

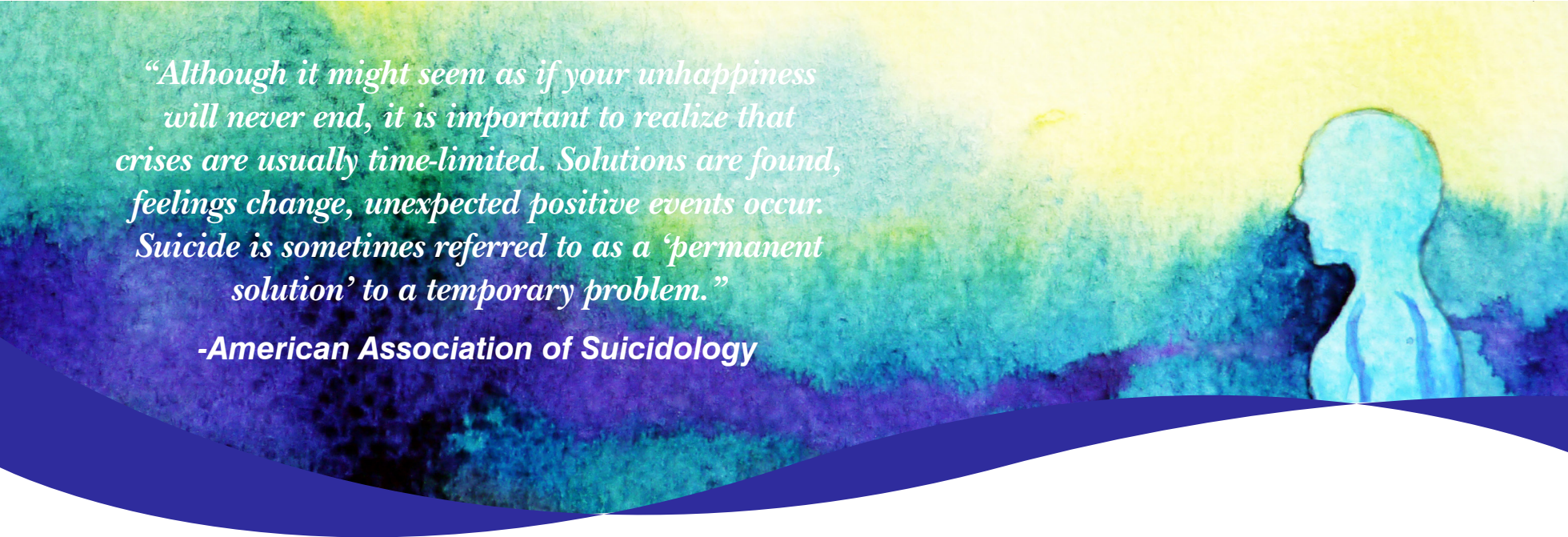


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# Beyond Sadness

*Bridging the gap between emotional and physical symptoms of depression*





*“Although it might seem as if your unhappiness will never end, it is important to realize that crises are usually time-limited. Solutions are found, feelings change, unexpected positive events occur. Suicide is sometimes referred to as a ‘permanent solution’ to a temporary problem.”*

**-American Association of Suicidology**

Make a personal safety plan. This includes creating a safe environment. Because suicide can be the result of an impulse, it is important to create a safe setting for yourself. Have someone remove access to poisons, weapons or methods that you may be tempted to use; both in your home and the home of friends/families where you spend time. Remove all firearms or keep unloaded guns and ammunition in separate, locked cabinets. Be sure you or someone else does not go alone to remove guns and remove any chemicals or poisons.

- **Avoid alcohol and other recreational drug use.**
- **Take all your medications as prescribed. Ask your doctor for smaller prescription amounts to avoid having large quantities available.**
- **Keep appointments with your doctor, therapist, or other providers.**

### Asking for help can be hard

It can be hard to talk with someone about these symptoms. Don't feel rushed or embarrassed, your health care provider wants to do everything they can to keep you healthy.

### Here are some ways to start your conversation:

*I just don't feel like myself lately.*

*My spouse thinks I might be depressed.*

*I'm having trouble controlling my diabetes, hypertension or other chronic illness.*

*I haven't been sleeping well lately.*

*Could I possibly have depression?*

### I Have Depression... Now What?

If you are diagnosed with depression, you need to know that it is common and highly treatable. Some people have a hard time accepting their depression because they feel it shows weakness or laziness. This is not true. Most are grateful to find a reason for their symptoms and to know they can be treated and get better.

Remember, depression is not your fault; it is a real illness with medical causes. Your habits or personality did not cause your depression and you do not have to face it alone.

Your health care provider will discuss treatment options with you and together you can arrive at the best course of action. We are glad you have taken this first step toward recovery.

## Physical Symptoms

- Sick and run down
- Difficulty sleeping
- Poor appetite
- Muscle pains
- Weight loss
- Tired

## Thoughts

- "Nothing good ever happens to me"
- "Life is not worth living"
- "My future looks bleak"
- "I'm worthless"
- "It's my fault"
- "I'm a failure"

## Feelings

- Overwhelmed
- Unhappy
- Irritable
- Frustrated
- Lacking confidence
- Indecisive

## Behaviors

- Overwhelmed
- Withdraws from others
- Doesn't get things done
- Stops doing enjoyable activities
- Has difficulty concentrating
- Increases alcohol consumption