

## Am I Clinically Depressed or Is It Just the Blues?

### What's the Difference?

Sadness or the blues are natural emotions that everyone experiences at some point in life. However, when that sadness persists, it may be a sign of something more serious. Clinical depression is a serious mental health condition that can have a significant impact on everyday life. If you, or someone you care about, is experiencing any of the following signs or symptoms, please contact your primary care physician who will give you, or your loved one, the medical assistance needed.

Symptoms of depression can include any of the following:

- Persistent sad, anxious, “empty” mood
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities, including sex
- Decreased energy, fatigue, feeling “slowed down”
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning awakening or oversleeping
- Low appetite and weight loss or overeating and weight gain
- Thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts
- Restlessness, irritability
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders and pain for which no other cause can be diagnosed



### When You're Down in the Dumps

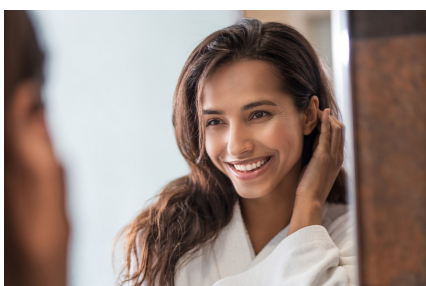
If you are, in fact, feeling blue or down in the dumps, allow yourself to feel your sadness all the way through without stifling or minimizing them. Recognize that these feelings are a part of life. Here are a few tips to help you get through it. Be encouraged — tomorrow's a new day!



✓ **Keep a mood journal.** This can help you process your feelings and identify patterns in your behavior. Studies show that time spent journaling about our deepest thoughts and feelings can reduce the number of sick days we take off work, and help us accept rather than judge our mental experiences, resulting in fewer negative emotions in response to stress



✓ **Find a hobby you love.** Taking time away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life to enjoy an activity is an excellent way to boost mental well-being. There's no limit to the type of hobby you can pursue — from creative endeavors to physical activities, intellectual pursuits or anything else that sparks joy. Whether it's savoring a solitary moment, spending time with friends, exploring the great outdoors, playing a sport or going on a vacation, dedicating yourself to engaging in things that give you pleasure can have a profoundly positive effect on your mental health



✓ **Exercise self-compassion.** This is the practice of being kind to yourself, especially when things don't go according to plan. It's about treating yourself with the kindness and understanding you would show to a friend in need. Self-compassion can be challenging to practice, especially when we are caught up in the throes of difficult emotions. But it can be incredibly beneficial in the long run. To practice self-compassion, start by being more mindful of your thoughts and feelings. Instead of judging yourself harshly, try to recognize and validate your emotions. Be gentle and understanding with yourself. Life is hard enough on its own

### Keep Your Mind on Your Mood

If you're noticing that your mood is consistently low and you don't seem to get much better, it's a good idea to seek professional help. Talk to your primary care provider or a **Magellan EAP** counselor about your situation's best course of action. They will work closely with you to evaluate and assess the best approach or treatment that will assist you on the road to feeling good again.