

## RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF DEPRESSION

We all can feel sad from time to time. Depression becomes more of an issue when it negatively affects the different aspects of our lives. If you have depression, you may feel sad but you may also have a decrease in appetite, loss of interest in usual activities, changes in sleep, changes in sexual activity, difficulty concentrating, a decrease in activities or social withdrawal, increased self-criticism, suicidal thoughts and/or a suicide plan. Depression can be even more serious if you have any five of these symptoms for at least a two week period. There is no single cause of depression



Clinical depression is a complex mood disorder caused by various factors, including genetic predisposition, personality, stress reaction, and brain chemistry. Counselling or psychotherapy is a safe and effective treatment for depression.

### Signs & Symptoms

The main symptom of depression is a sad, despairing mood that:

- is present most days and lasts most of the day
- lasts for more than two weeks
- negatively affects the person's performance at work, at school or in social relationships.

Other symptoms of depression include:

- changes in appetite and weight
- sleep problems
- loss of interest in work, hobbies, people or sex
- withdrawal from family members and friends
- feeling useless, hopeless, excessively guilty, pessimistic or having low self-esteem
- agitation or feeling slowed down
- irritability
- fatigue
- trouble concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- crying easily, or feeling like crying but being not able to
- thoughts of suicide (which should always be taken seriously)
- a loss of touch with reality, hearing voices (hallucinations) or having strange ideas (delusions).

## Causes & Risk Factors

Potential triggers of depression include:

- genetic or family history of depression
- psychological or emotional vulnerability to depression
- biological factors such as imbalances in brain chemistry and in the endocrine/immune systems
- major stress in the person's life.

### Depression and physical illness

Depressive symptoms may be:

- the result of another illness that shares the same symptoms (e.g., lupus, hypothyroidism)
- a reaction to another illness (e.g., cancer, heart attack)
- caused by neurological changes resulting from a physical illness (e.g., stroke).

## CMHR Approach to Treatment for Depression

Concepts in Mental Health and Resilience offers private counselling for individuals with depression. We strive to support individuals and families throughout their wellness journey by empowering them to reach for their goals and work towards continued resiliency.