Understanding Depression

What Is Depression
Depression can be caused by one specific incident or a combination of factors. Grief over the loss of a loved one, a major life change, physical or emotional harm by another person, a physical injury, illness, or even side effects of medication could cause depression. Depression can also be caused by changes in the brain, and in many instances is hereditary. Depression often runs in families.

How Is Depression Treated
Depression may be treated with or without medication, with individual or group counseling, diet, exercise, or other types of interventions including alternative therapies. Depression responds best to a combination of treatments – such as counseling and medication. Regardless of the approach taken, it is important to have depression evaluated by a medical doctor, preferably a psychiatrist. Thoughts of suicide warrant the immediate need for medical attention.

What Causes Depression?
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What If I Am Thinking About Suicide?
Suicidal thoughts are very dangerous and should not be ignored. If you are having suicidal thoughts, get help immediately! Go to your nearest emergency room, tell a close friend or family member, or call your EAP.

What Are The Symptoms Of Depression?
Symptoms of depression may include sadness, hopelessness, irritability, feelings of guilt, crying spells, sleep and eating disturbances, a negative self-image, the inability to feel joy, changes in body weight, decrease in energy or sexual interest, headaches, and thoughts of suicide. Depression may include other symptoms not listed here as well. Do not blame yourself for symptoms of depression, and do not permit them to grow worse. Instead, seek help.

What The EAP Can Do
An EAP counselor can screen you for depression and help you find medical help for further evaluation and treatment within with your health plan. If you do not have insurance, the EAP can help you locate other community-based resources. In addition, the EAP can provide support, short-term counseling and guidance on managing symptoms of depression.

Myths About Depression
There are many myths about depression. These include the beliefs that depression is a sign of weakness and that you are hopeless, crazy, or should be able to “just snap out of it.” It is also a myth that depression causes alcoholism or other drug addictions. Addictive diseases are primary illnesses, which means they are not secondary or caused by other medical conditions. It is possible, however, to have both diagnoses at the same time. This is called a “dual diagnosis.”