



## Depression in Women: 4 Things to Know

Feeling sad is a normal reaction to difficult times in life. Depression is different—it is a mood disorder that can affect how a person feels, thinks, and acts. Unlike temporary sadness, depression can persist for weeks, months, or even longer, often interfering with daily activities and relationships.

**1. Depression is a medical condition.** Depression is a serious mood disorder influenced by genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors. While anyone can experience depression, it is more common in women due to unique biological, hormonal, and social factors. It is not caused by anything a woman has done or not done, and she cannot simply "snap out" of it—most women require treatment to recover.

**2. Depression has signs and symptoms.** Depression involves more than just sadness and includes symptoms like anxiety, irritability, hopelessness, loss of interest in activities, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, changes in sleep or appetite, physical pain without a clear cause, and thoughts of death or suicide. These symptoms can significantly affect daily life. If symptoms last for at least two weeks, it's important to talk to a healthcare provider. Depression varies among individuals, with some experiencing many symptoms and others just a few.

**3. Certain types of depression are unique to women.**

Certain types of depression are linked to specific stages in a woman's life due to hormonal and physical changes. Premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) is a severe form of PMS, causing symptoms like depression, irritability, and physical discomfort before menstruation. Perinatal depression occurs during pregnancy or after childbirth, involving extreme sadness, anxiety, and fatigue that hinder daily activities. Perimenopausal depression affects some women during the menopause transition, with symptoms like irritability, sadness, and anxiety that go beyond typical menopause changes like mood swings and hot flashes.

**4. You can get help.** Even the most severe cases of depression can be treated. Common treatments include antidepressant medications, talk therapy (either virtual or in person), or a combination of both.

Since treatment is not the same for everyone, it may take some trial and error to find the right approach for you. A healthcare provider can guide you through different options and help determine the best treatment based on your symptoms. With support, you can feel better.

**If you're having a hard time, your EAP can help. Call your designated BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150 to speak about options for support and what resources your company may provide for you.**



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