

# Understanding Depression



**Leaving the Pit Behind**

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# What is Depression?

- Sadness is a normal reaction to life's struggles, setbacks, and disappointments.
- Depression is **different** from normal sadness by:
  - Engulfing your day-to-day life,
  - Interfering with your ability to work, study, eat, sleep, and have fun.
- The feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and worthlessness are intense and unrelenting, with little, if any, relief.



# NOT ALL DEPRESSION IS THE SAME TYPE (9 types)

- Major Depression
- Dysthymia
- Post Partum Depression
- Seasonal Affective Disorder
- Atypical Depression
- Psychotic Depression
- Bi-Polar Depression (Manic/Depression)
- Premenstrual Dysphonic Disorder
- Situational Depression



# Common Signs and Symptoms

- Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
- Loss of interest in daily activities
- Appetite or weight changes
- Sleep changes
- Anger or irritability
- Loss of energy
- Self-loathing
- Reckless behavior
- Concentration problems
- Unexplained aches and pains



# Changes in behavior and thinking

- These may include:
  - General slowing down
  - Neglect of responsibilities and appearance
  - Poor memory
  - Inability to concentrate or think clearly
  - Suicidal thoughts, feelings, or behaviors
  - Difficulty making decisions
  - Negative attitude and outlook



# Risk factors

- Loneliness
- Lack of social support
- Recent stressful life experience
- Family history
- Early childhood trauma/abuse
- Substance abuse
- Health problems or chronic pain



# Intervening with a depressed friend

- Be empathetic and understanding
- Don't try to "cheer up" a depressed person by minimizing their concerns
- Avoid critical or shaming statements
- Empathize with feelings of sadness, grief, anger and frustration, but...
- Challenge expressions of hopelessness



# Intervening with a depressed friend

- Don't argue about how bad things are
- Don't insist that depression or sadness are the wrong feelings to be experiencing
- Don't become angry even though your efforts may be resisted or rejected





# Bible Characters and Depression

- Cain (Gen. 4:6-7).



# Bible Characters and Depression

- Jonah (4:1-11).



# Bible Characters and Depression

- Elijah (1 Kings 19:1-18).



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# Bible Characters and Depression

- David (2 Sam. 12:10ff).



# Bible Characters and Depression

- Job.



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# Jesus

Lk. 13:34-35; Matt. 26:38; Mk. 14:33ff;  
Lk. 22:39-46

- Grief over rejection of the grace of God.
- In the Garden of Gethsemane.
- Scourging and crucifixion.
- “Learned obedience from the things He suffered” (Heb. 5:8).



