

## Depression

Depression is a common but serious mental health condition characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or guilt. Depression can be experienced by anyone, regardless of life circumstances, and there are many effective treatments and strategies that can help in managing this condition.

### What is depression?

Everyone feels sadness at certain times. Although it might be common to use the word “depressed” as a synonym for “sad”, depression is much more complex than a single emotion.

Depression is a mood disorder that impacts emotions, behaviors, and overall functioning. Often, those who experience depression may experience a number of various symptoms. Below is a list of symptoms and signs from the Jed Foundation. Depression is often characterized by feeling sad or uninterested in activities that you used to enjoy for two weeks or more, but symptoms can vary. Visit <https://jedfoundation.org/resource/understanding-depression-and-depressive-disorders/> to review this list and to learn more.

- Constantly feeling sad, empty, or hopeless
- Changes in appetite that are unrelated to diet goals, such as eating too little or too much
- Changes in sleeping patterns that can range from insomnia to sleeping too much
- Feeling fatigue or a lack of energy
- Losing interest or losing pleasure in usual hobbies
- Feeling restless, irritable or frustrated, even over small issues
- Having trouble concentrating or remembering things
- Feeling guilty, worthless, or like you are “not enough”
- Having thoughts of death or suicide. These can range from expressing thoughts like, “I wish I were dead,” to making plans about how you would end your life.



**If you are having thoughts of suicide**, contact the MN Crisis Text Line for free 24/7 support by texting MN to 741741 or contact the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988. If there is immediate risk of harm to self or others, call 911.

### What causes depression?

Like most mental health conditions, there are a number of factors that can influence our risk and experience. Key factors include:

- **Biology.** Our brains and the chemicals they produce (such as serotonin and dopamine) impact our moods and our ability to regulate our emotions.
- **Genetics.** Many mental health conditions have genetic links. Those who have family members with a history of depression may be more likely to experience it themselves.
- **Social Factors.** Social support, or lack thereof, could be a major factor in a person’s ability to cope with difficulty. Strong, supportive personal relationships may act a protective mechanism, while unsupportive relationships or abusive relationships may increase risk for depression.
- **Life Circumstances and Trauma.** Difficult life circumstances, such as prolonged experiences of stress, as well as a history of trauma may increase risk for depression.

### How common is depression?

You are not alone if you have experienced depression. Depression is one of the most common mental health conditions. According to the results of the 2020 Boynton Health Survey, **38% of Anoka Technical College students have been diagnosed with depression** at some point in their lifetime.

## Am I experiencing depression?

Those living with symptoms of depression may feel as if they will have to feel this way forever; however, there are many forms of treatment that can help. In fact, depression is one of the most treatable mental health conditions. As a first step to seeking care, many people will see a mental health or medical professional who can assess for depression. They will ask you questions about your symptoms and help determine if what you are experiencing sounds like depression. Then, they will assist in exploring available treatment options.

If you are interested in completing a self-assessment to help in determining if your symptoms align with depression, consider the mental health screenings available from Mental Health America. These assessments are free and confidential, but they are not a substitute for seeking a professional diagnosis or care. The assessment can be found online here: <https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/>



## Seeking Help & Support

If you are experiencing depression, suspect possible depression, or live with diagnosed depression, there are many sources of help and support available to you.

Some may choose to see a mental health practitioner, such as a counselor or therapist, or a medical practitioner. Some may choose to seek self-help resources or support from peer groups.

As an Anoka Technical College student, a great place to start is with a college counselor. Counseling services are available to students at no charge. See the box title “Counseling Services” for additional details.

For self-help resources, check out the information available from the Jed Foundation found in the “Additional Resources” Section.

There are also many valuable resources available off campus. Visit the Anoka Technical College student resources webpage to view the content listed under the section “Mental Health and Chemical Dependency Resources” found here: <https://www.anokatech.edu/student-services/>

[student-basic-needs-resources/](#)

If in crisis, contact the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988. This is a free and confidential service that provides support to people in distress and information regarding crisis resources. If there is immediate risk of harm to self or others, call 911.

## Counseling Services

Counseling services are available to support Anoka Technical College students. A counselor can talk with you about any concerns or difficulties you are facing, provide support, and help in developing strategies and skills to promote wellness and goal achievement. Counseling services are confidential and free. You are encouraged to reach out for support.



To learn more about counseling services, visit: <https://www.anokatech.edu/student-services/counseling-services/>

To schedule an appointment with a counselor, visit the weblink above or call 763-576-7860.

## Additional Resources

There are many resources available on depression and related topics. Check out the following resources available from the Jed Foundation ([jedfoundation.org/mental-health-resource-center](http://jedfoundation.org/mental-health-resource-center)).

- [What’s the Difference Between Sadness and Depression?](#)
- [Understanding Depression and Depressive Disorders](#)
- [How to Tell Someone, “I’m Depressed,” and Ask for Help](#)
- [How Is Depression Diagnosed and Treated?](#)
- [Six Tips for Managing Depression](#)
- [How Can I Help Someone Who Seems Depressed?](#)
- [What Is the Connection Between Depression and Suicide?](#)
- [What Are the Warning Signs of Suicide?](#)
- [How to Tell Someone You Are Thinking About Suicide](#)
- [How to Ask Someone If They Are Thinking About Suicide](#)