



Mental Health Musings

Tip of the Day:

Identifying Depression

Are you depressed? To find out you can go online and take this simple depression screening called the PHQ-9 (Patient Health Questionnaire- 9) at <https://www.mdcalc.com/phq-9-patient-health-questionnaire-9>. It will ask the following questions with which you can chose 1 of 4 answers; not at all (0 points), several days (1 point), more than half the days (2 points), or nearly every day (3 points). The last question (#9) is not scored but helps to assess the impact depression has on your life.

- 1) **Little interest or pleasure in doing things?**
- 2) **Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless?**
- 3) **Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much?**
- 4) **Feeling tired or having little energy?**
- 5) **Poor appetite or overeating?**
- 6) **Feeling bad about yourself — or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down?**
- 7) **Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television?**
- 8) **Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or so fidgety or restless that you have been moving a lot more than usual?**
- 9) **Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or thoughts of hurting yourself in some way?**

Add up the scores for questions 1 through 8 to find out your rating on the following chart:

0-4	Minimal or none	Monitor; may not require treatment
5-9	Mild	Use clinical judgment (symptom duration, functional impairment) to determine necessity of treatment
10-14	Moderate	Use clinical judgment (symptom duration, functional impairment) to determine necessity of treatment
15-19	Moderately severe	Warrants active treatment with psychotherapy, medications, or combination
20-27	Severe	Warrants active treatment with psychotherapy, medications, or combination

What is depression? Depression, also called Major Depressive Disorder is termed a mood disorder that is a sustained period of sadness or loss of interest. It affects how you think, feel, and act and can even cause physical symptoms such as chronic pain. It can decrease your motivation and ability to deal with daily responsibilities. At its worse you may feel hopeless or suicidal. If you are feeling hopeless or suicidal call 911 right away. If you are feeling depressed without those severe symptoms please seek mental health treatment as soon as possible. Depression is not a weakness and you cannot just ‘snap out of it’. It requires help. [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20356007>]

Here are some different ways to assist with decreasing depression:

- **Get in touch with trusted friends and share what you are going through.**
- **Practice the arts: music, dance, art, etc...**
- **Get out into nature**
- **Bathe**
- **Listen to something uplifting**
- **Reach out to a spiritual advisor, practice your spirituality, or list things to look forward to**

What are some of your ideas about increasing positive mood? How have you successfully dealt with depression in the past?

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