

Paper Clip – Depression

Description: A common, but serious, medical condition in which a person feels very sad, hopeless, unimportant, and has a loss of interest in many activities. With appropriate diagnosis and treatment, however, these symptoms usually improve.

Possible Cause: It is not known what exactly causes depression. Some potential causes may include: abuse, certain medications, conflict, death or loss, hormones, genetics, major events and life changes, serious illness, or substance abuse.

Diagnostic Tests: Physical exam, Laboratory (blood) to help determine if there is an underlying medical issue, and a psychological evaluation.

Conversation with Member:

1. Case Manager/Care Coordinator

- **General opening:** “How are things going with your overall feelings about yourself and your life situation?”
- **Offer Information:** “I have some information to share with you regarding your depression or feeling down. Are you willing to discuss your depression with me? It is important to work with your provider and to follow the plan of care.”
- **Get more specific:** “It’s important that you see your provider. Your provider may wish to do a physical exam and some lab tests to rule out any underlying medical problems. Also, a psychological evaluation may be done. These will be done to help determine potential causes of your depression and develop a care plan for helping you to feel better.”
- **Lifestyle impacts & Medical Tx options:** Once you and your provider determine the cause of your depression, you need to follow the plan of care that has been developed.
 - If you begin medications, do not stop the medication without consulting with your provider. Know it may take a few months for the medication to help you begin feeling better.
 - You also can try a few other things:
 - Simplify your life
 - Get more exercise
 - Get enough sleep
 - Other activities that may help improve symptoms include:
 - Journaling
 - Joining a group
 - Structuring your time
 - Starting a new hobby or getting back into an old hobby
 - Socializing with friends and family
 - Try not to make any major decisions when you are feeling down.
- **Review the member’s plan of action:** “Based on this information, can we make a plan for you to work with your provider to determine the cause of your depression and a plan to help you feel better?”

2. Customer Service

- **General opening:** “Is it ok if I share some information with you about depression?”
- **Offer Information:** “Depression symptoms can be improved with through treatment. It’s important to work with your provider and follow the plan of care that is best for you.”
- **Get more specific:** “To help your provider determine the possible cause of your depression, and develop a plan to manage your depression, you may need to have a physical exam done with some lab work, and also a psychological evaluation.”
- **Lifestyle impacts & Medical Tx options:** “Once you and your provider determine the cause of your depression, you need to follow the plan of care that has been developed specifically for you:
 - If you begin medications, do not stop the medication without consulting your provider. Know it may take a few months for the medication to help you begin feeling better.
 - You also can try a few other things:
 - Simplify your life
 - Get more exercise
 - Get enough sleep
 - Other activities that may help improve symptoms include:
 - Journaling
 - Joining a group
 - Structuring your time
 - Starting a new hobby or getting back into an old hobby
 - Socializing with friends and family
 - Try not to make any major decisions when you are feeling down.”
- **Review the member’s plan of action:** “We recommend you contact your healthcare provider for any questions you have about your depression so you and your provider can create a plan that will best manage your depression.”

References:

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA): <https://www.dbsalliance.org> and toll free phone number is 1-800-273-TALK

Accessed 2/23/2023

National Institute of Mental Health: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>

Accessed 2/23/2023.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm>

Accessed 2/23/2023