



Teens + Depression

You are not alone

PATIENT EDUCATION

Hope

It is real

Ask for help

HAVE A PLAN
Stay connected

BARBARA WOODWARD LIPS
PATIENT EDUCATION CENTER

This brochure was created
with the help of teens who deal with
depression every day.

The first part includes thoughts, feelings, tips, and wisdom from these teenagers on all kinds of topics ranging from taking your medication to hanging with friends. The second part is an action plan to help you recognize when you are depressed and know what to do.

A very special thank-you to these courageous
young people who shared their personal stories to try to make a
difference in your life.



Finding your way out

Nobody chooses to be depressed. Really, who wants to sit around and feel sad? But if you do feel this way, you can choose to take action.

You may want to get better. But **you may not know where to start.** You might think other people can make you better.

Other people can't make you completely better, but they can help you. Let others help you reach the point that you can help yourself.

Talk to a doctor about things that might help you. This might be taking medications or changing to a different one.

It might be trying some type of therapy such as "talk therapy." You might try talking to one therapist or going to a group session with other teens who are depressed.

The will has to come from you. Depression isn't like a broken leg where others take care of you. You can't have surgery to fix your depression. You've got to be willing to try to get better, then others can care for you too.

There's no magic solution to getting better. It can be a long process. You just have to stick with doing what you know you need to do.

You have to find it in yourself
to want to get better

Here are some thoughts from other teens:



on having **depression:**

“Depression is real!

It’s a medical problem.
You’re not weird.”

Anyone

“Anyone can have it — any race, age, boys or girls — anyone. **Even famous people have it.”**

“It’s not like it’s a choice. You don’t choose to be depressed. **But you can choose to try to get better.”**

TRY



“You are not alone.

Many kids are depressed.
You aren’t going to be the only one getting help.”

on knowing you count:

Remember, you may not think you are worth much, but others do.

Always remember how much you mean to others, *and how sad they would be if you weren't around.*

Write down the name of someone who cares for you.

Realize your gifts.

Write down something that is special about you. If you want, ask someone close to you.

○ medications:

“It’s frustrating when the medications don’t work right away. Because you want to feel better now! **But keep taking them and talk to your doctor if they don’t work.**”

“Stay on your meds!”

“I thought the only thing I had to do was take the meds and I’d feel happy. But it didn’t work that way and I was mad.

I learned meds were only one part of what I had to do.

They’re important, but they’re only one part.”

“I had to try three different drugs before we found one that worked for me.

It took awhile, but I got there.”

“Ask about the cytochrome P450 genetic testing

If your doctor hasn’t mentioned it already, ask about genetic testing. If you’ve had trouble finding the right medication, it can help point you and your doctors in the right direction. The testing showed what medications my body could break down, and why previous medications I’d been on didn’t work. I had just started a new med when I had the testing done, and I learned that my body didn’t break down the other meds I’d been on. Plus the testing told us that I could break down the new med, so it was nice to know in advance that once that med kicked in, it would actually work for me. I wish I had it done sooner because I could’ve gotten on a better medication earlier.”

Learn about **“Don’t use drugs or alcohol.”**

The doctors mean it when they tell you, ‘Just say no.’ They just make your depression worse. They can also be very dangerous when mixed with prescription medications.”

“Medication can help, but you need to take it right, take it every day, and **don’t quit because you feel better.** Don’t skip it, don’t take too much, and don’t get frustrated.”

○ friends:

“Try not to shut friends out.

Let them in and help them understand how you are feeling and what they can do to help. Talking to other people helped me remember I wasn't alone.”

Let them in

“Realize the impact of your friends.”

people who give you energy

“Avoid situations and people who stress you out. **Be around people who give you energy,** not ones who take it from you.”



“Don't be around people who minimize your problems. I had a friend who would say, 'Snap out of it!' It's not that simple. I don't hang around her anymore. **I choose to hang around people who bring me up.**”

Write the names of people who lift you up.



on how you **feel:**

“I knew I was depressed when I didn’t stop to talk to my friend group on the way in to school. I just went right to class. Then I’d get home and I didn’t want to study. My grades slipped. I stopped using IM and I didn’t answer emails. I just wanted to go to bed and pull the covers over my head.”

Any of these how you feel? **Circle them.**

Isolated

No concentration,
hard to focus

No energy

Having headaches

Low self-esteem

Can’t sleep

Alone and helpless

No interest in friends

Can’t focus

No interest in TV shows

Always scared I’ll fail

Eat too little

Like it isn’t possible
to ever feel better

Eat too much

Worthless

Feel like a burden
to those around me

Don’t care about
things I used to like

Don’t want to spend
time with my friends

stay

“Not feeling safe from your own
self is a terrible thing. You just
can’t run away from yourself.

**So you’ve got to
stay and deal.”**

deal

on getting help:

“Get help! You’ve got to tell someone like a friend or a doctor or a minister or your parents or your coach. It’s got to be someone who will do something about it.”

someone
 “Form an ongoing relationship with someone who knows how to help you. Maybe it’s your pediatrician, a psychiatrist, a psychologist, or a therapist. But know how to call someone who knows what is going on with you.”
to help

“Don’t be scared to ask for help.
 I wish I had asked earlier.”

they cared

“Sometimes I felt like people were bullying me into getting help. But that wasn’t it.

They were just being persistent because they cared.”

“Depression can come back!
Know your early signs that depression is coming back, **so you can use good coping skills and get treatment.”**

on what **to do:**

“Take care of yourself.”
 Try to get enough sleep and eat well.”

Do things that help you relax. What helps you relax?

“Work hard to force yourself to do things that you need to. Like going to school or just getting out of bed.”

“Surround yourself with things that make you happy.” Like pictures of fun times and people and pets you love.”

“Do what you used to like, even if you don’t really feel like doing it. **Make the effort!**”

“Stay connected.”



on what to do:

Write down some simple plans:

Today:

This week:

This month:

“Make simple plans for yourself.

Like, ‘I am going to turn all my math assignments in on time this week. Or, I’m going to hang out with a friend this weekend. Or, I am going to get on the treadmill for 5 minutes today.’”

plan

“**Go to** upbeat movies, listen to cheerful music, dance like crazy, talk to your dog, talk to people who care.”

on what to do:

“Give yourself something to look forward to every week and stick with it. Like, if you love skating, go skating once a week. Or play soccer or see a movie. Or set time aside to read for fun. Just make it part of your schedule.”

Write down something you look forward to every week.

unique

“In therapy, I learned about ‘self-talk.’ That means, every day, I need to repeat to myself the things that will lift me up. So I say, **‘I am worthwhile. I am special. I am important. I can beat depression.’**”

Write something positive you are going to say to yourself:

Now practice saying it every day!

Remember: Never say to yourself what you wouldn't say to someone else.

on never giving up:

“Recognize that there is ‘stigma’ to having depression. That’s because people just don’t understand it. Accept that you can help some people understand and that others won’t.”

“Fake it until you make it.”

It’s a saying that means do what you are supposed to do — like go to school and talk to friends — even if you don’t feel like it because it makes you feel better later.”

“When my depression was out of control, I felt like I was on a roller coaster. Ups, downs, back up again and down again. Now that I am doing what I should to handle my depression, those hills are behind me.”

“I’m coming back up and things are looking brighter and better”

“The first time you use skills for bringing yourself up, it’s hard. But the more you do those things, the easier it gets, and the better you’ll be at it.”

“There’s no quick cure.

You have to watch for signs that it is getting the best of you. Then do something!”

Your plan for Taking Control

“But the most important thing: You’ve got to have a plan – a plan for not letting depression get the best of you.”

1
Assess yourself every day.

2
Know your warning signs.

3
Take action!

4
Plan for tough times.

5
Have a safety plan.

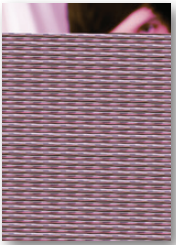
1

assess

Assess yourself every day. Ask yourself, "How am I feeling?"

Use a number scale. Ten can be "I feel AWESOME!" Zero can be "I hate everything or I feel very down."

Since everyone is different, make a scale that fits you. So — make your own scale right here — then use it.



When I'm between 0 and 3

I'm feeling _____

I'm thinking _____

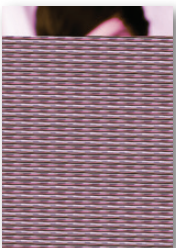
I'm doing _____

When I'm at a 5

I'm feeling _____

I'm thinking _____

I'm doing _____



When I'm between 8 and 10

I'm feeling _____

I'm thinking _____

I'm doing _____

2 know

Know your warning signs. Watch for signs that your depression is getting worse. Be aware of the things you do or feel when you are losing control.

Any of these happening?

- You have thoughts about hurting yourself, someone else, dying or committing suicide.
- You have a plan for committing suicide.
- You feel stressed out all the time or your stress level is getting worse.
- You feel like there's no hope, like you're trapped with no way out.
- You can't sit still and feel restless or agitated, like you can't stop moving your feet or hands.
- You stop doing your homework or other responsibilities that you know you are supposed to do.
- You withdraw from your friends and family. For example, you stop sending emails or answering calls or texts from people.
- You start acting reckless, taking chances on risky activities.
- You become really active and talk too much.
- You are moody and irritable.

What are your warning signs?

3 take action

Do things that
you know make
you feel better.

Here are some
ideas:

- Take a walk.
- Talk to someone who supports you and builds you up.
- Listen to music.
- Get on the computer and chat with friends.
- Exercise! Research shows it works!



What makes you feel better when you're down?

4 plan

Plan for tough times.

Have a plan for dealing with things that you know are going to bring you down.

Like getting a bad grade on a test or arguing with a friend or parent.

What can you do before?

What can you do after?

5 safety plan

Have a safety plan.

When you are feeling depressed, sad or blue, have a plan for what you are going to do about it. You have to talk to someone!

Who are you going to tell?

If you feel like you want to hurt yourself - **RIGHT NOW:**

- 1.** Tell a parent or another responsible adult.
- 2.** Go to an emergency room or tell your doctor.
- 3.** Call 911.
- 4.** Call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

THE SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE
988 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

OK, so now you've got a plan for staying in charge.
Make it part of your life every day all your life.

on feeling better:



“I was surprised when I started feeling better.

It was like, “Wow! I feel normal!” It was weird, but good.”

“Keep taking your
meds even when
you feel better!

One of the reasons you
feel better is because of
those meds.”

“I didn’t think I was going to
get better. I’m happy to be
alive. And I plan to
stay that way.”

Notes

Mayo Clinic: Scottsdale and Phoenix, Ariz.

480-301-8000

Mayo Clinic: Jacksonville, Fla.

904-953-2000

Mayo Clinic: Rochester, Minn.

507-284-2511



BARBARA WOODWARD LIPS PATIENT EDUCATION CENTER

Mrs. Lips, a resident of San Antonio, Texas, was a loyal Mayo Clinic patient of more than 40 years and a self-made business leader who significantly expanded her family's activities in oil, gas and ranching. Upon her death in 1995, Mrs. Lips paid the ultimate compliment by leaving her entire estate to Mayo Clinic. By naming the Barbara Woodward Lips Patient Education Center, Mayo honors her generosity, her love of learning, her belief in patient empowerment and her dedication to high-quality care.

This material is for your education and information only. This content does not replace medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. New medical research may change this information. If you have questions about a medical condition, always talk with your health care provider.



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