

# Understanding Depression

**What is depression:** We all feel sad from time to time but normally are not experiencing depression. However, Depression is one of the most common concerns across all treatment settings. So, it is important to know what to look out for. These are the common symptoms.

- Feeling sad, empty or hopeless. This may come across in our field by seeing the guys we support teary eyed or irritable.
- Lack of interest and pleasure in most or all daily activities.
- Change in weight without dieting, can be loss or gain of weight.
- Insomnia or feeling constantly sleepy.
- Fatigue
- Feeling worthless or excessive guilt.
- Inability to concentrate.
- Thoughts of death/suicide.

Our response to **SUICIDAL THREATS & IDEATION:**

As caregivers we need to take any suicidal statements or threats **seriously**. As an agency our response is:

1. If a person we support makes a suicidal statement, first ensure safety (keep on an eye on them)
2. A staff should remain present with the person we support until they can be assessed. Do not leave them alone.
3. Staff will call the House Clinical (during work hours) or Clinical on call (after hours) for an assessment to be done. Clinical Director can also be called directly for these situations.
4. The clinician will speak the person we support and determine how to proceed.
5. The clinician will provide staff with direction on the next steps.
6. All suicidal statements must be documented in Therap (GER).

\*\* Please note if you hear someone make a suicidal statement make the call. You do not need to be assigned to the person to call the clinician.

**What causes depression?** Depression can be internally driven (based on our biology) or environmentally triggered (grief/stress). Some other diagnoses can cause or increase depressive symptoms (Cancer, IDD, etc.).

**What should I do?** If you notice changes in a person you support or yourself, you should talk to your health care provider. There are many options available! The most effective treatment for depression is a combination of medication and therapy. However, there are many options that can be explored.

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: Author.