MAJOR DEPRESSION

**Major depression** is manifested by a combination of symptoms that interfere with the ability to work, study, sleep, eat, and enjoy once pleasurable activities. Such a disabling episode of depression may occur only once but more commonly occurs several times in a lifetime.

**Symptoms of Major Depression**
A Major Depression is marked by a combination of symptoms that occur together, and last for at least two weeks without significant improvement. Symptoms from at least five of the following categories must be present for a major depression, although even a few of the symptom clusters are indicators of a depression, but perhaps not a major depression.

- Persistent depressed, sad, anxious, or empty mood
- Feeling worthless, helpless, or experiencing excessive or inappropriate guilt
- Hopeless about the future, excessive pessimistic feelings
- Loss of interest and pleasure in your usual activities
- Decreased energy and chronic fatigue
- Loss of memory, difficulty making decisions or concentrating
- Irritability or restlessness or agitation
- Sleep disturbances, either difficulty sleeping, or sleeping too much
- Loss of appetite and interest in food, or overeating, with weight gain
- Recurring thoughts of death, or suicidal thoughts or actions

This list is a guide to help you understand depression. It is not offered for you to diagnose yourself. If you have some of these symptoms, don't focus on how many symptoms you have. Instead, talk to a counselor about how you have been feeling, to see if he/she can help.

Call the Counseling Center 402.280.2733 or visit them in Brandeis 203!

**First Person Description of Major Depression**
It takes the greatest effort to get out of bed in the morning. I am tired all day, yet when night comes, sleep evades me. I stare at the ceiling, wondering what has happened to my life, and what will become of me. Nothing is getting done at work. I have projects to complete, but I can't think. I try to focus on my work, and I get lost. I keep wondering when my boss will discover how little I have accomplished. My girlfriend does not understand. She keeps telling me to "snap out of it." I'm irritable all the time, and I snap at people, then I feel terrible later. Nothing is fun any more. I can't read, and the music I used to enjoy so much does nothing for me. I am bored, but I feel like doing nothing. There are times, when I'm alone, that I think that life is hopeless and meaningless, and I can't go on much longer.

Sleep problems, difficulty with concentration, chronic fatigue, irritability, feelings of hopelessness, loss of interest in pleasurable activities - the list of symptoms does not convey the despair of depression. When you feel lost, hopeless, and don't know what to do, you might be depressed. Even if you have just a few of the symptoms of depression, talk to someone who can help, consult with a psychologist, and find out what can be done to help you change!

**Sources:**

National Institute of Mental Health [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

[www.psychologyinfo.com/depression](http://www.psychologyinfo.com/depression)