



Huron County Board of Mental Health and Addiction Services

2 Oak Street • Norwalk, Ohio 44857 • 419-681-6268

Depression Awareness & Mental Health Screening Month

October is recognized as Depression Awareness Month each year. The purpose is to increase understanding, decrease stereotypes, and help educate on how depression and other mental health issues impact people. In the fall of the year, as the days shorten, it seems only fitting that October is a time to reflect on depression, as well as other forms of mental health challenges. The truth is, each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental health condition. Depression is a common mental health concern in America and throughout the world. Far more than just “feeling sad,” depression negatively impacts how a person feels, thinks, and acts. It can cause disruption to school, work, and personal interests. Misconceptions and misunderstandings of depression contribute to continuing stigmas about people living with the condition, the reasons it occurs, and their willingness to seek care.

Annual estimated prevalence among individuals in the United States

1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year, 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year, and 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year. Below is the reported breakdown:

- Estimated 48 million people experience Anxiety Disorders
- Estimated 19.4 million people experience Major Depressive Episode
- Estimated 9 million people experience Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- Estimated 7 million people experience Bipolar Disorder
- Estimated 3.5 million people experience Borderline Personality Disorder
- Estimated 3 million people experience Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Estimated 1.5 million experience Schizophrenia

Mental Health and Depression in Huron County: Huron County Community Health Assessment Data

Mental health challenges affect us all, either directly or indirectly through family, friends, or coworkers. That is why we find it critical to raise awareness of mental health, depression, reduce stigma, and provide resources for support not just in October, but year-round. According to the Huron County Community Health Assessment, an estimated one in five adults have been diagnosed with a depressive disorder or anxiety disorder, 21% of Huron County adult respondents have been diagnosed with a depressive disorder, 19% have been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, and about 12% of youth have seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months and about 22% have self-harmed.

It is important to remember that although there is a significant number of Americans affected by mental health challenges, the exact number of people who struggle each year is unknown. Often, the numbers reported are much lower than the actual because of stigma. Stigma not only reduces reporting, but it also becomes a major barrier that prevents people from seeking the treatment that they need. But with numbers like these, it is imperative that we continue to spread awareness, reduce stigma, and let each person know that help is available.

Mental Health and Depression

Everyone occasionally has bouts of sadness, but these feelings are usually fleeting. However, when a person has a depressive disorder, it interferes with daily life and normal functioning. It is a common but serious illness. There is no single known cause of depression, but it likely results from a combination of genetic, biochemical, environmental, and psychological factors. Depression commonly coexists with other illnesses, such as anxiety disorders or alcohol/substance abuse. It can affect anyone at any time, from children to older adults.

Recognizing the Symptoms



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People who struggle with depression do not all experience the same symptoms. The severity, frequency and duration will vary depending on the individual and the illness. Some of the signs and symptoms may include:

- Trouble falling, staying asleep or sleeping too much.
- Poor appetite or overeating
- Feeling sad, anxious, or “empty” often
- Feeling guilty, worthless, or hopeless often
- Loss of interest in activities you/they once enjoyed.
- Feeling a lack of energy or motivation to do normal activities.
- Trouble concentrating on activities such as reading or watching TV.
- Thoughts or mentions of suicide.

***It is important to note that people who have gone through a recent emotional crisis or who are grieving a recent loss may experience these symptoms more often.*

There is Help

Depression is highly treatable. First, you can take a free mental health screening. Screenings are not a professional diagnosis, however, screenings can point out the presence or absence of depressive symptoms and provide a referral for further evaluation if needed. The next step is to reach out for help. Visit your primary care physician, call a local mental health treatment provider, or visit a support group and talk to others who may relate to what you are experiencing. In addition, it is important to take care of yourself; exercise, participate in activities, spend time with friends and relatives, and think positively. If you have access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), they may be able to help as well.

Helping a Loved One Affected by Depression

Knowing someone who struggles with depression can affect you too. The most important thing to do is to help him/her get appropriate treatment and support. Below are some ways to help someone you care about:

- Offer emotional support, understanding, patience and encouragement.
- Be a good listener and start a conversation on how they are feeling and express support.
- Offer to help find therapy or support groups.
- Invite your friend to do things with you; if they decline, keep trying, but don't push.
- Remind your friend that with time and treatment, depression will lift.
- Never ignore comments about suicide; report them to your friend's relative or doctor or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988.

How can you support, participate, and raise awareness for Mental Health?

- Share our daily Facebook posts (you never know who will need support, resources, or encouragement).
- Help distribute local treatment and support resources found on our website (www.hcbmhas.org) with those who may need them.
- Get connected (contact our local NAMI at www.namissw.org)
- Spread Hope. Display a sign in your yard to encourage others. (Signs available: “Don't Give Up”, “You Matter”, and “You Are Not Alone”. Contact MHAS to pick up a sign for free)
- Share your story. People living with depression, those living with people with depression, survivors of victims of suicide, and others can get involved and make a difference in others' lives by sharing their stories. This may be done at events, through organizations' websites, or on social media. Reach out to MHAS if you are interested in learning more about ways to share your story to inspire and provide hope for others.



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- Take a Mental Health Screening.
This brief assessment will help you or someone you care about determine if they should connect with a behavioral health professional. To access this questionnaire, visit <https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/depression/>.

Resources for Help

If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call 911 immediately.

If you are in crisis or are experiencing difficult or suicidal thoughts, you can call:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988
- Firelands HopeLine: 567-867-HOPE

If you're uncomfortable talking on the phone, you can also text **4HOPE** to 741-741 to be connected to a free, trained crisis counselor on the Crisis Text Line.

For a list of local treatment providers and support services visit: www.hcbmhas.org.

Sources: <https://www.nami.org/get-involved/awareness-events/mental-illness-awareness-week>
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