

# The Wellness Exchange

October 2009



BUSINESS HEALTH SERVICES<sup>SM</sup>

Solutions for a Healthier Workplace<sup>SM</sup>

For more information call 1-800-765-3277 or visit [www.bhsonline.com](http://www.bhsonline.com)



## Depression Awareness

October is National Depression Awareness Month. Most, if not all, know someone who has experienced depression, but do you really know what depression is or feels like? Depression is an illness, in the same way that diabetes or heart disease are illnesses. More than 18 million Americans suffer from depression, with about twice as many women as men affected. Depression can be thought of as a “whole body” illness because depression affects a person’s body, feelings, thoughts and behaviors.



### What is Depression?

All of us have probably experienced bouts of the blues or periods of sadness in our lifetime. However, if these feelings persist for more than a couple of weeks you could be suffering from clinical depression. According to MediLexicon’s Medical Dictionary depression is, “a mental state characterized by feelings of sadness, loneliness, despair and low self esteem.” It is important to remember that depression is an equal opportunity illness; it affects all ages, all races, and both genders. The effects of depression can also be felt in the workplace since depression is the second leading cause of missed work time.

### Symptoms

Symptoms of depression vary from person to person, but someone experiencing depression may exhibit some of the below symptoms:

#### Changes in Thinking

- problems with concentration and decision making
- forgetfulness
- increased pessimism
- poor self esteem

#### Changes in Feelings

- feeling sad for no reason
- no longer enjoy pleasurable activities
- lack of motivation
- irritability and/or difficulty controlling temper

#### Changes in Behavior

- excessive crying
- poor hygiene
- apathetic
- social withdrawal

#### Changes in Physical Well Being

- chronic fatigue
- loss of appetite
- complaining of aches and pains

### Causes of Depression

Determining the cause of depression is not easy and in a number of cases the cause remains unknown. Some recent research

indicates there may be a genetic component to the development of depression. An uneven balance of mood influencing chemicals in the brain has also been found to play a role. Individuals who have a poor self-image, who view themselves negatively, or have difficulty dealing with life challenges may be more susceptible to experiencing depressive symptoms and ultimately developing depression. Other things that could trigger a depressive episode include: a serious loss, chronic illness, relationship difficulties, or unwelcomed change.

### Treatment

Treatment is available and has a high success rate if you’re willing to do the work it takes to get better. Counseling and medication (antidepressants) are the two primary treatment approaches. Some people can get better with the help of counseling alone and may not need medication. Other people need a combination of medication and counseling to help them feel better. Often times the medication can make therapy more effective. It is very important that the prescription and management of medication be done by a responsible physician working closely with the patient and the therapist.

**If you ever experience depressive like symptoms it is important to reach out immediately to Business Health Services or other health care professional for help. Remember depression is treatable.**

For additional information  
call BHS today.

1-800-765-3277

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# Domestic Violence

**Victims of domestic violence can be members of any social class or racial group. They can be women or men, in heterosexual or same-sex relationships. Whatever the group, it is unlikely that the victim will volunteer information to you about his or her abuse. You must remain alert for signs of domestic violence and know how to get help.**

## What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic Violence is also called battery, partner abuse, or spousal abuse. Domestic violence is a type of abuse, and it involves injuring someone, usually a spouse or partner, but it can also be a parent, child or other family member. Domestic violence is a serious problem. **It is the most common cause of injury to women ages 15 to 44.** Victims may suffer physical injuries such as bruises or broken bones. They may suffer emotionally from depression, anxiety or social isolation. It is hard to know exactly how common domestic violence is, because people often don't report it.

## How to Help

Many victims of domestic violence will talk in general about their relationship when they are approached in a kind and understanding manner.

### DO

- Offer help
- Support decisions
- Ask
- Express concern
- Listen and validate

### DON'T

- Wait for him/her to come to you
- Judge or blame
- Pressure
- Give advice
- Place conditions on your support

## Are You Being Abused?

### Does the person you love ...

- Threaten to hurt you or your children?
- Say it's your fault if he or she hits you, and then promises it won't happen again (but it does)?
- Put you down in public or keep you from contacting family or friends?
- Throw you down, push, hit, choke, kick, or slap you?
- Force you to have sex when you don't want to?

Just one "yes" answer means you're involved in an abusive relationship.



### If you are being abused, REMEMBER

1. You are not alone
2. It is not your fault
3. Help is available
4. You deserve to be treated with respect
5. You deserve a safe and happy life

Recognizing abuse is the first step towards getting help. For advice and support, you can call the National Domestic Violence hotline at 1-800-799- SAFE(7233)

## What Employers Can Do

- Be aware of unusual absences or behavior and take note of bruises or emotional distress.
- Contact the Human Resources Manager to discuss concerns, resources available, and ways to support the employee, such as safety planning, counseling, family resource referrals, flexible scheduling, or security measures.
- Assist the employee with documenting all incidents with the batterer that occur in the workplace.
- If you witness an incident at work, contact your safety manager or law enforcement immediately.
- Take action against domestic violence by encouraging employees to volunteer and by providing financial or support to your local domestic violence programs.

For more information on Domestic Violence please visit the following sites:

- [www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)
- [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org)
- [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)
- [www.DVcenter.org](http://www.DVcenter.org)

**Business Health Services** is a free and confidential program provided by your employer for you and your household members. BHS can help resolve personal and professional problems.

Call Today! 1-800-765-3277