

DEPRESSION: HOW TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

Dr. Holly Sawyer, PhD, MS, LPC, NCC, CAADC

Life First Therapy, LLC



Who Am I?

Life First Therapy LLC, a private practice providing psychotherapy to professional black women helping them navigate their life and career without using substances to cope with depression &/or anxiety when experiencing microaggressions in the workplace.

Mental health public speaker and self-published author of "It's Time to Talk About Trauma."

Clinical supervision to recent graduates and professional consultation to licensed professionals.

15 years of experience teaching and developing higher education courses online and face-to-face.



Dr. Holly Sawyer, PhD, MS, LPC, NCC, CAADC

Life First Therapy, LLC



TODAY'S AGENDA



Define Depression

1

Useful Language

2

How to Support

3



DEPRESSION



1

Definition 1

A common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act.

2

Definition 2

A mental health disorder characterized by persistently depressed mood or loss of interest in activities, causing significant impairment in daily life.

3

Definition 3

A mood disorder that involves a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest.

Depression is a common mental disorder affecting more than 264 million people worldwide.

CAUSES OF DEPRESSION

The causes of depression include complex interactions between social, psychological and biological factors.

Life events such as childhood adversity, loss and unemployment contribute.

Untreated depression can lead to development of other mental health disorders: substance abuse disorder, anxiety disorder and eating disorder.



SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION



1

EMOTIONALLY

Helpless, hopeless, worthless, and reduced interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed

2

PHYSICALLY

Insomnia, fatigue or loss of energy, agitation, restlessness, and pacing up and down, sleeping too much, a loss of sexual desire, changes in appetite, unintentional weight loss or gain and slowed movement/speech

3

MENTALLY

Difficulty thinking, concentrating, or making decisions, recurrent thoughts of death or suicide, or an attempt at suicide

Symptoms of depression can vary from mild to severe and can be short-term or chronic.

DEPRESSION IN MEN



- Around 9% of men in the US have feelings of depression
- More likely than females to drink alcohol in excess, display anger, and engage in risk-taking as a result of the disorder
- Other symptoms may include: avoiding families and social situations, working without a break, having difficulty keeping up with work and family responsibilities, displaying abusive or controlling behavior in relationships



DEPRESSION IN WOMEN

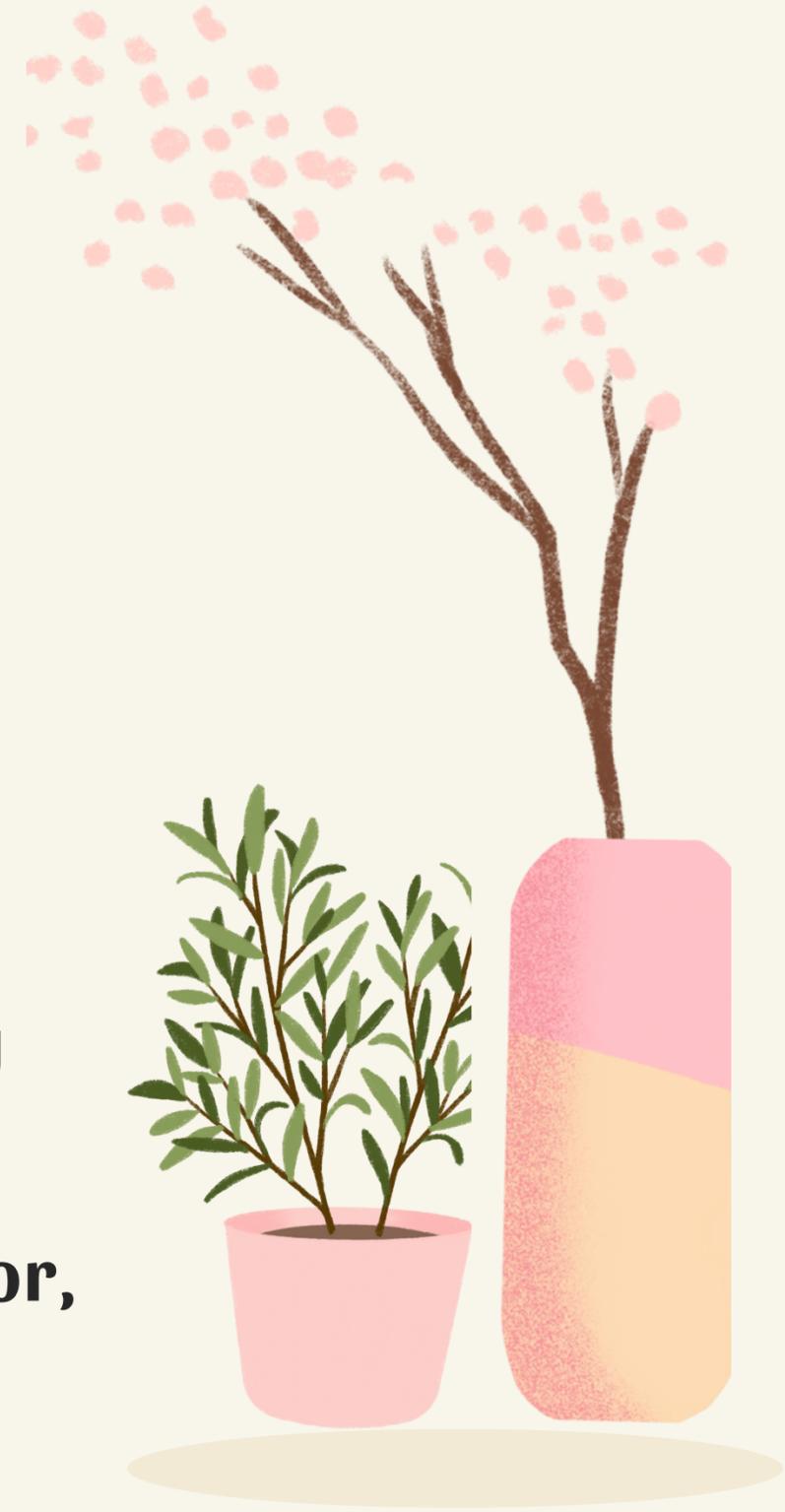
- **Nearly twice as common among women as men**
- **Symptoms of depression that tend to appear more often in females include: irritability, anxiety, mood swings, fatigue, ruminating (dwelling on negative thoughts)**
- **Types of depression unique to women: postpartum depression and premenstrual dysphoric disorder**



DEPRESSION IN CHILDREN

- **In the U.S., 3% (*about 1.9 million*) of children and teens aged 3–17 have a diagnosis of depression**
- **Symptoms can make schoolwork and social activities challenging**
- **Symptoms include: crying, low energy, clinginess, defiant behavior, vocal outbursts,**

Younger children may have difficulty expressing their feelings of sadness in words.



DEPRESSION IN TEENS

- **Physical changes, peer pressure, and other factors can contribute to depression in teens**
- **They may experience some of the following: withdrawing from friends and family, difficulty concentrating on schoolwork, feeling guilty, helpless, or worthless, restlessness, such as an inability to sit still**



USE OF LANGUAGE



AVOID SAYING

“Why can’t you just get dressed/eat/get out of bed?”

INSTEAD SAY

“You seem to have trouble getting dressed/getting out of bed/eating. What can I do to help?”

AVOID SAYING

“What’s your problem?”

INSTEAD SAY

“You seem to be finding this issue a big deal at the moment. How can we solve it together?”

USE OF LANGUAGE

AVOID SAYING

"It's all in your head."

"You're just having a difficult day."

"I'm sure it's nothing to worry about."

"Man up. You can deal with this on your own."

"Why are you talking about this stuff?"

"You don't want people to think you're crazy."



USE OF LANGUAGE

INSTEAD SAY

“I’ve been worried about you. How are you –really?”

“I understand. How can I help you find help?”

“Feeling depressed/anxious isn’t a sign of Weakness. It takes courage to speak up?”



USE OF LANGUAGE

Since many people suffering from depression have lost their ability to recognize their positive attributes, giving plenty of reassurance can also be very helpful.

Question 1:

**Can I relive your stress
in any way?**

Question 2:

**What do you think
might help you feel
better?**

Question 3:

**Is there something I
can do for you?**



HOW TO SUPPORT



1

LISTEN

People with depression can spend a lot of time reflecting on their situation. Give understanding and sympathy by listening.

2

AFFECTION

Offer a hug or to hold them for a moment. This also conveys how you are there for them.

3

ACCEPTANCE

Try not to be offended if your loved one asks you to leave them alone. Sometimes, that is the most helpful thing you can do at that moment. It is also important to accept the person where they are and not let it totally consume your life.

HOW TO SUPPORT



4

You too have to take care of yourself. Set healthy boundaries. Know your limits as to how you can commit to helping them while balancing your own needs so you can recharge and look after them the best way possible.

5

Offer to fix your loved one lunch, tidy up their place, take them out for coffee a movie or grocery shopping, or take a fitness class together.

6

PATIENCE & UNDERSTANDING
Everyone's response to trauma is different. Don't judge your loved one's reaction against your own response or anyone else's.

BOUNDARIES

GET ACTIVE

PATIENCE & UNDERSTANDING

HOW TO SUPPORT



ENCOURAGEMENT

7

Help your loved one to socialize and relax by encouraging them to participate in physical exercise, seek out friends, and pursue hobbies and other activities that bring them pleasure.

DON'T TAKE IT PERSONAL

8

Your loved one may become angry, irritable, withdrawn, or emotionally distant. Remember that this is a result of being depressed and may not have anything to do with you or your relationship.

THANK YOU, STAY IN TOUCH!



Dr. Holly Sawyer, PhD, MS, LPC, NCC, CAADC
Life First Therapy, LLC



hnsawyer@lifefirsttherapy.com



www.lifefirsttherapy.com



[@lifefirsttherapyllc](https://www.instagram.com/lifefirsttherapyllc)



[Linkedin.com/in/drhollysawyer12/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/drhollysawyer12/)

