

Signs of Depression



Are You Depressed?

How do you know if you're depressed? The following is not a scientific tool, but rather a way for you to identify contributing conditions in your life. There are yellow indicators, which signal caution and should be monitored, and red indicators, which signal identified symptoms of depression. Red indicators are certainly important for you to be aware of, but watch for the number of yellow indicators present. Yellows tend to turn into reds over time, if not addressed. Yellow indicators can include conditions that have been present in your life for a long time, even a number of years. Red indicators come from the established criteria for clinical depression and, because of the severity, can have a much shorter duration.

The indicators are gleaned from our experiences at my counseling center and from a whole-person point-of-view.

Yellow Indicators:

- A loss of enjoyment in established activities.
- Feeling restless, tired, or unmotivated at work.
- An increase in irritability or impatience.
- Feeling either "wound up" or "weighed down."
- Feeling overburdened with life and its activities.
- A lack of spiritual peace or well-being.
- Finding relief by controlling aspects of your personal behavior, including consuming or restricting liquids or food.
- A fear of expressing strong emotions.
- A constant anxiety or vague fear about the future.
- Feeling unappreciated by others.
- Feeling a sense of martyrdom as if you are constantly asked to do the work of others.
- Exercising a pattern of impulsive thinking or rash judgments.
- A loss of interest in sexual activities or sexual difficulties.
- A sense of enjoyment at seeing the discomfort of others.
- Anger at God for how you feel.
- A recurrent pattern of headaches, muscle aches, body pains.
- Feeling social isolation and distancing from family or friends.
- Feeling trapped during your day by what you have to do.
- Displaying a pattern of pessimistic or critical comments and/or behaviors.
- Feeling like your best days are behind you and the future doesn't hold much promise.
- Feeling "left out" of life.
- Bingeing on high-calorie foods to feel better.

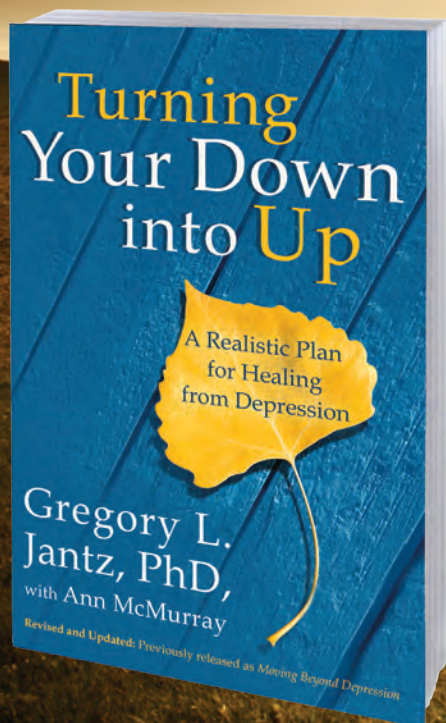
- Apathetic upon waking about how the day will turn out.
- Feel it is easier to just do things yourself instead of wanting to work with others.
- Experience recurring gastrointestinal difficulties.
- Feeling trapped inside your body.
- Dread over the thought of family get-togethers or social gatherings.
- Feeling overweight, unattractive, or unlovable.
- Feeling old, discarded, without value.
- Unmotivated to try new activities, contemplate new ideas, or enter into new relationships.

The higher the number of yellow indicators that apply, the greater the need to seek out professional help. Life was not meant to be lived in the shadow of depressive thoughts, feelings and actions. Regaining control over your life – your optimism, hope and joy – can require therapeutic and medical support.

Red Indicators:

- A significant change in appetite, lasting longer than two weeks, resulting in either marked weight loss (if not dieting) or weight gain.
- Recurring disturbances in your sleep patterns for longer than two weeks, resulting in difficulty falling and staying asleep or sleeping too much.
- Increased agitation or inability to relax, occurring for an extended period of time (over two weeks).
- Feelings of fatigue, lethargy, or loss of energy, occurring for an extended period of time (over two weeks).
- Feelings of sadness, despondency, despair, loneliness, or feelings of worthlessness, ongoing for an extended period of time (over two weeks).
- Inabilities to concentrate, focus, or make decisions, recurring over a period of time (over two weeks).
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide.
- Planning or attempting a suicide.

If any of the red indicators are present, professional help for depression should be immediately obtained.



Source: *Turning Your Down into Up* by Gregory L. Jantz, PhD.