

Depression is a medical condition that affects people of all ages and situations. Depression can best be understood as a spectrum, ranging from mild situational depression (ex., sadness after the loss of a loved one, a breakup, or difficult adjustment) to serious, persistent Major Depressive Disorder that lasts for years and cripples normal functions. Some sadness in life is normal, but if after several weeks the feeling doesn't pass, it may be likely you are experiencing depression. There is no one cause for depression, and it is critical to understand that severe depression is a legitimate medical challenge, that can and should be treated in the same way one would treat a broken arm or a bout of the flu.

### *I think I may be depressed. What should I do?*

1. Start with talking to someone such as a good friend, parent, or Church leader. Help them understand your challenges, and don't be afraid to lean on your support system during particularly challenging times.
2. Our bodies are closely connected to our minds. There is plenty of evidence that exercise can be enormously helpful in treating depression. Some kinds of depression are also linked to the season; people are more likely to be depressed in the winter months where there is less sun. Examine your environment and see what healthy, helpful changes can be made.
3. Find what you love, and do more of it. For many, art, photography, writing, music, or theatre can be wonderful and safe outlets. Time spent with animals or an emotional service animal can also be therapeutic. Find an outlet that encourages positive feelings and optimistic thinking.
4. Turn to things that bring the Spirit into your life. There can be an immense comfort found in the scriptures and in your prayers to Heavenly Father. Remember that at the center of the gospel is joy—don't be too hard on yourself and avoid negative self-talk. Heavenly Father loves you and wants you to be happy.
5. For more severe or persistent depression, you should absolutely seek medical help. There is a variety of therapy, counselling and medication available to treat your depression and help lift the burden. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained, "If you had appendicitis, God would expect you to seek a priesthood blessing and get the best medical care available. So too with emotional disorders." Because no two cases of depression are the same, no two treatment plans are the same; it may require time and patience to find a form of treatment or medication that works best for you.

### **Additional Resources**

- SilverCloud is an online self-help program available through CAPS. It includes programs for depression, anxiety, stress, and body image and can be found through the CAPS website or on <https://byu.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/>.
- "Like a Broken Vessel" by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/10/like-a-broken-vessel?lang=eng>
- [lds.org/mentalhealth](https://www.lds.org/mentalhealth) includes help, resources, and videos with personal experiences



### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Murdock, E. B. (2016, September). Dealing with depression. New Era.

BYU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 801-422-3035, [caps.byu.edu](https://caps.byu.edu), 1500 WSC

BYU offers free counseling for students through Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) located in 1500 of the Wilkinson Student Center. Take advantage of this resource!

## wsr.byu.edu

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