

Depression Through Our Lifetime

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Women are not immune to mental health issues. Actually, having two XX chromosomes makes mental health issues specific to women more likely throughout their life time. Hormones play some role in these diagnoses, but life-stressors also contribute, and this combination puts woman at high risk. Severe PMS and post-partum and menopausal depression are examples of these difficult times in a woman's life. Bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, major depression and substance abuse issues may also be present at any time.

It is easy to ignore or minimize symptoms of

depression as a normal part of life and stress resulting in many people not getting the treatment they need and deserve. Poor sleep, changes in appetite, feelings of fatigue and irritability are, at times, a part of all of our lives. When these problems begin to interfere in our functioning, a psychological or psychiatric assessment is important and possibly life-saving. It is essential to step back and evaluate your functioning, as well as listen to friends or co-workers when excessive sleep, moodiness or withdrawal from usual activities is becoming a prominent part of your life. Talking therapy, medication management or both are very effective treatments for depressive illnesses.

Depression is an illness and not a weakness of character. It may be diagnosed as early as the teenage years and as late as with our oldest matriarchs.

Older adult women struggle with many losses, including loss of friends and family, possessions, independence, physical strength, bodily function and even their home and driving ability. These losses are a huge reason for older women to be at very high risk for suicide. It is easy to understand these as good reasons for feeling depressed, but there is a major difference between normal grieving and clinical depression. When the grief interferes with a person's ability to function, it is time for a professional evaluation.

As important as it is to

maintain your general health with mammograms and pap tests, please make it a point to examine your mental health as well.

If you or someone you know needs emotional support, the Lifeline is available 24/7 at (800) 273-TALK (8255). If you are interested in becoming a part of the Summit County Suicide Prevention Coalition, call (330) 762-3500 or email at preventsuicide@admboard.org.



**Portage Path Behavioral Health's
SUPPORT Hotline**

Call 330-434-9144 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
for 24-hour assistance.

**The Summit County Suicide
Prevention Coalition**
preventsuicide@admboard.org