

## Sadness -vs- Depression

It's natural to feel sad if you experience disappointment or loss. Normal sadness is understandable and usually fades as you learn to cope with the event that caused it, and re-involve yourself in your day-to-day life.

**Depression is different.** It does not improve the same way as normal sadness does.

**If a number of symptoms continue for more than two weeks, and aren't connected with an understandable disappointment or loss, you could be depressed.**

### Common Signs of Depression:

- Feeling sad most of the day, nearly every day.
- Becoming irritable about abnormal things. Men are more likely to show this sign of depression.
- Unable to stop worrying or overthinking situations.
- Difficulty concentrating because of worry.
- Disinterest in doing things you usually enjoy.
- Wanting to be alone, isolating yourself.
- Trouble waking up or falling back asleep because of worrying OR sleeping much more than usual.
- Feeling tired, lacking energy.
- Feeling like you can't control your emotions.
- Being asked by others if something is wrong.
- Feeling physically ill (stomach upset, trouble eating, headaches, muscle aches).
- Thinking you would be better off dead.

## Depression is NOT a weakness.

Sometimes people won't seek help for depression because they worry what others might think.

**You are not alone.** An estimated 16.2 million adults have had at least one major depression episode – and that doesn't even factor in many more with a milder form of depression.

Depression is a complex medical condition. Like any medical condition, it requires treatment.

**Untreated depression can be fatal.** From 1999 to 2016, North Dakota experienced a 57% spike in suicide rates – the highest in the nation. Part of this can be attributed to our stoic, independent culture – our belief that we need to hide our struggles or ignore it or pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. But that doesn't work. **Depression requires intervention.**

## I'm worried about someone.

- **Simply ask if they are okay.** When someone is depressed, they may not realize it. They could be too close to the situation to assess it objectively or their mood has declined so gradually that they can't see how their behavior has changed. Be prepared to share with them, in a non-judgmental and non-shaming way as possible, as to why you're concerned and what you've observed.
- **Listen to what they really have to say.** Avoid debating the value of life, minimizing their problems or giving advice.
- **Let them know you care about them.**
- **Ask if they have considered harming themselves,** even if it feels uncomfortable. Research shows that bringing up the topic of suicide to someone who is suicidal will **NOT** put them at greater risk for suicide. It usually has the opposite effect, by destigmatizing the topic and inviting them to open up.

## Depression IS treatable.

We know that not everyone experiences and handles stress in the same way. We recognize there can't be a one-size-fits-all approach to treating depression, stress and anxiety. There are multiple, evidence-tested treatments that **CAN** help, ranging from medications to calibrate your brain chemistry to counseling approaches to help you cope with the ups and downs of life itself.

## Where to get HELP.

- **NDSU Extension** offers resources for dealing with farm/ranch stress.  
[www.ag.ndsu.edu/farmranchstress](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/farmranchstress)
- **Together Counseling LLC** offers farm-to-farm telehealth therapy services. These counselors currently work on a farm or have farming backgrounds.  
701-404-0997 • [togethercounselinggroup.com](http://togethercounselinggroup.com)
- **In an emergency call 9-1-1**
- **FirstLink Help Line call 2-1-1**  
<https://myfirstlink.org/>
- **National suicide-prevention hotline** - available 24 hours/day **800-273-8255**



For non-emergency situations, speak with your health care professional about mental health services in your area.

You don't  
have to  
go it alone ...

NDSU | EXTENSION



Wearing  
out your  
Bootstraps?

**HELP is  
available.**



In North Dakota,  
we expect a lot from our **Bootstraps.**

Farmers and ranchers learn early on how to troubleshoot almost any foreseeable challenge and to take care of our own problems.

But sometimes life throws more at us than even the strongest bootstraps can support. It's not because we're weak or whiny. It's because we are human and life is just plain tough sometimes.

Everyone – whether they show it or not – can feel sad or frustrated or overwhelmed, and it doesn't mean they are failures. Those feelings are just information, like a temperature gauge or “check engine” lights. It's a cue that something needs to be corrected before it can be up and running again.

