



## **Mental Health America of Franklin County**

2323 W. Fifth Ave. Suite 160, Columbus, OH 43204

Telephone: (614) 221-1441 Fax: (614) 221-1491

info@mhafc.org

www.mhafc.org

# **Depression in The Workplace**

---

Clinical depression has become one of America's most costly illnesses. Left untreated, depression is as costly as heart disease or AIDS to the US economy, costing over \$43.7 billion in absenteeism from work (over 200 million days lost from work each year), lost productivity and direct treatment costs<sup>i</sup>. Depression tends to affect people in their prime working years and may last a lifetime if untreated. More than 80 percent of people with clinical depression can be successfully treated. With early recognition, intervention, and support, most employees can overcome clinical depression and pick up where they left off.

### **Know The Facts**

- Depression ranks among the top three workplace problems for employee assistance professionals, following only family crisis and stress<sup>ii</sup>.
- 3% of total short-term disability days are due to depressive disorders and in 76% of those cases, the employee was female<sup>iii</sup>.
- In a study of First Chicago Corporations, depressive disorders accounted for more than half of all medical plan dollars paid for mental health problems. The amount for treatment of these claims was close to the amount spent on treatment for heart disease<sup>iv</sup>.
- The annual economic cost of depression in 1995 was \$600 per depressed worker. Nearly one-third of these costs are for treatment and 72% are costs related to absenteeism and lost productivity at work<sup>v</sup>.
- Almost 15% of those suffering from severe depression will commit suicide<sup>vi</sup>.

### **Employees Attitudes Towards Depression**

- Often times a depressed employee will not seek treatment because they fear the affect it will have on their job and they are concerned about confidentiality.
- Many employees are also unaware they have depression or they fear their insurance is inadequate to cover costs.
- Most employers will refer a depressed employee for help if they are aware of the symptoms. 64% of MHA Survey respondents said they would refer an employee to an EAP health professional<sup>vii</sup>.

### **Learn to recognize the symptoms of clinical depression**

No two people experience clinical depression in the same manner. Symptoms will vary in severity and duration among different people. See your doctor\* if you experience five or more of the following symptoms for more than two weeks:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood.
- Sleeping too little, early morning awakening, or sleeping too much.
- Reduced appetite and/or weight loss, or increased appetite and weight gain.
- Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed, including sex.
- Restlessness, irritability.
- Persistent physical symptoms that don't respond to treatment (such as headaches, chronic pain or digestive disorders).

- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.
- Fatigue or loss of energy.
- Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless.
- Thoughts of suicide or death.

As a first step, a thorough physical examination may be recommended to rule out other illnesses.

**Help Is Available**

<b>National Alliance on Mental Illness</b>	<b>1-800-950-NAMI</b>
<b>National Depression Screening Project</b>	<b>1-800-520-6373</b>
<b>DEPRESSION/Awareness, Recognition and Treatment Program, The National Institute of Mental Health</b>	<b>1-800-421-4211</b>
<b>National Depressive and Manic Depressive Association</b>	<b>1-800-82-NDMDA</b>

---

<sup>i</sup> Greenberg, P.E., Stiglin, LE, Finkelstein, SN, Berndt ER. The economic burden of depression in 1990. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*. 1993; 2:32-35.

<sup>ii</sup> Employee Assistance Professionals Association 1996 Survey.

<sup>iii</sup> First Chicago EAP Study, 1989-1992.

<sup>iv</sup> JOM, Volume 36, Number 9, September 1994, p. 987.

<sup>v</sup> Conti DJ, Burton, WN. Economic Impact of Depression in a Workplace. *Journal of Occupational Environmental Medicine*. 1994; 36:983-988.

<sup>vi</sup> American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition. Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1994.

<sup>vii</sup> Mental Health America, American's Attitudes Towards Depression Survey, 1996.

**Mental Health America of Franklin County** is a private, not-for-profit organization, established in 1956. We help people navigate the mental health system. We are dedicated to promoting mental health in Franklin County through advocacy, education, and support services. Our programs include: information and referral to community mental health and alcohol/drug services; free support groups for people with mental illness and their families; an Ombudsman program that assists clients in navigating the mental health and alcohol/drug system; mental health screenings in English and Spanish; Pro Bono Counseling Program where underinsured and uninsured individuals can receive free counseling; community and professional mental health education including Get Connected; maternal mental health support and advocacy (POEM); and a quarterly newsletter featuring legislative updates and new happenings at MHAFC. We receive funding from the Franklin County ADAMH Board, United Way of Central Ohio, individuals, foundations, and corporations. To become a member or find out more information, please visit us online at [www.mhafc.org](http://www.mhafc.org).