

**BAY COUNSELING CLINIC, LLP**

**DEPRESSION: MYTH AND FACT**

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**MYTH #1:** Depression is not a real medical illness.

**FACT:** Clinical depression is a serious medical condition that affects not only an individual's mood and thoughts, but also their body. Research has shown that depression has genetic and biological causes. Brain scans of depressed patients show decreased activity in some areas of the brain.

# DEPRESSION: MYTH AND FACT

**MYTH #2:** Even if depression is medical illness, there is nothing that can be done about it.

**FACT:** Depression is treatable, and more than 80% of individuals with depressive disorders improve with treatment. The first step in treatment is a physical examination by your physician to rule out other causes. The next step is to decide on your treatment options, which may include medication, psychotherapy or a combination of both.

# DEPRESSION: MYTH AND FACT

**MYTH #3:** Depression is no different from getting the “blues” – It is just a normal part of life.

**FACT:** Saying depression is like the blues is like saying the common cold is the same as pneumonia. The “blues” only last a day or two and are usually in response to an upsetting event. Depression can last a lifetime, and is much more pervasive and disabling. No one commits suicide because they have the blues.

# DEPRESSION: MYTH AND FACT

**MYTH #4:** People who think they have depression are just feeling sorry for themselves.

**FACT:** Depression affects 19 million people in the U.S. alone. Some well know individuals who have suffered from depression include: Alexander the Great, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Ludwig von Beethoven, Michelangelo, and Isaac Newton.

# DEPRESSION: MYTH AND FACT

**MYTH #5:** You can will depression away. If you can't, then you are weak.

**FACT:** Depression can't be willed away any more than heart disease or diabetes can. It's caused by chemical changes in the body, which can't be overcome simply by positive thinking and determination. Given how much stigma is still attached to mental illness, seeking help is an act of courage and strength, not weakness.

# DEPRESSION: MYTH AND FACT

**MYTH #6:** Depression will go away by itself.

**FACT:** Depression can last for months, or even years. Once an individual has had one episode of depression they are predisposed to have more. Clinical depression is a potentially fatal disease, and suicide could be the end result of waiting for it to go away.

# DEPRESSION: MYTH AND FACT

**MYTH #7:** Depression is a normal part of getting older.

**FACT:** Depression is not a normal part of aging, but seniors do generally experience more of the events that can trigger depression: loss of family and friends, ill health, isolation and financial worries. The highest rate of suicide of any age group occurs in that of people 65 and older, with men being more vulnerable than women.

# DEPRESSION: MYTH AND FACT

**MYTH #8:** Depression does not affect children or teenagers. Their problems are just part of growing up.

**FACT:** According to the National Institute of Mental Health, studies show that 1 in 33 children and 1 in 8 adolescents are depressed in any given year.

# DEPRESSION: MYTH AND FACT

**MYTH #9:** If someone in your family suffers from depression you will inherit it.

**FACT:** In the same way you can be genetically predisposed to high blood pressure or diabetes, you can be genetically predisposed to depression. This does not mean that if a family member has depression you will too. Just be aware that your chances of having depression are higher than if you had no family history and seek treatment if you start to develop symptoms.