



# RECOVERY

# TOOLS FOR

## Getting out of the Dumps Tools for Managing Depression

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 10% of the population suffer from a depressive illness during any 1 year period. Depression that goes untreated costs our economy millions of dollars in lost wages, lost productivity and a lower quality of life. The good news is that depression is easy to treat and 80% to 90% of people being treated recover.

### **Symptoms of depression include:**

- Loss of interest in activities you usually find pleasurable.
- Feeling worthless or guilty.
- Sleeping too much, too little or waking up very early.
- Loss of appetite and weight loss or increased appetite and weight gain.
- Having less energy or feeling slowed down.
- Restlessness, irritability.
- Problems concentrating, remembering or making decisions.
- Physical problems that don't go away, even with medical treatment, such as headaches, digestive problems or chronic pain.
- Thoughts of death or suicide.

If you suffer from depression, get treatment. There are also steps you can take to control your symptoms and begin living a positive life.

**Get medical care** - Some depressions are caused by medical

problems. The first step in treating depression is ruling out or treating any physical illnesses.

**Educate yourself** - Learn all you can about your illness. Knowing about the illness and what to expect gives you a sense of control. Your mental health center, your public library and self help groups are all good sources of information.

**Avoid negative people** - Do your best to avoid people who put you down and make you feel worthless. Try to be around people who value and care about you.

**Join a self help group** - Involvement in a self help group can give you support, friendship, and caring as well as teach you new ways to cope with your illness.

**Evaluate your lifestyle** - Sometimes, our lifestyle can contribute to depression. Evaluate the way you live. Stress, feeling unfulfilled, or being around angry people are situations you have some control over. Evaluate which things you need to change in your life and do it.

**Set small goals for yourself.** Depression has a negative effect on self esteem. People who are depressed often feel worthless. Setting and accomplishing small goals will give you a sense of self worth and achievement.

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**Schedule your day** - Scheduling your time gives you a sense of control over your life and can help you achieve your small goals.

**Learn to relax and manage stress** - Stress contributes to the feeling of being out of control and can contribute to depression. Find something relaxing to do. To learn more about stress management techniques, talk to your therapist or staff at your mental health center.

**Exercise** - For many, exercise has been shown to dramatically decrease the symptoms of mild depression. You don't need to invest in expensive exercise equipment, just get out and take a walk. If you have medical problems, talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program.

**Help Someone Else** - Helping others has a positive effect on your mood. Not only does it take your mind off your own problems, you get the good feelings from helping someone else.

**Take your medication** - Most people with moderate and severe depression or who are recovering from depression will do better with medication. If your doctor has prescribed medication and it works, keep taking it. Sometimes a person will stop taking his or her medication when they begin to feel better. Doing so may cause the depression to return.

Taking positive action can help you deal with your depression. For more information, contact your mental health center, support group, or the Depressive, Manic Depressive Association (DMDA) at 312-642-0049. You can also call the Access to Care Line at

**1-800-804-5008.**

### Community Mental Health Centers

Pikes Peak MHC  
719-573-9514

Spanish Peaks MHC  
719-545-2746

San Luis Valley MHC  
719-589-3671

Southeast Mental  
Health Services  
719-384-5446

West Central MHC  
719-275-2351

Southwest Colorado  
MHC  
970-259-2162

Midwestern MHC  
970-249-9694

Colorado West MHC  
970-945-2241

Colorado Health Networks believes that people can and do recovery from mental illness. That is why we created *Recovery Techniques*. *Recovery Techniques* is a series of tip sheets that are written by and for consumers about issues, opportunities and obstacles people face in their recovery from mental illness. These tip sheets are available through your mental health center or by calling the Access to Care Line at

**1-800-804-5040.**

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