

## Knowing the Difference Between Depression and Sadness

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for many of us. The fear and anxiety about COVID-19 may be overwhelming, causing a higher level of stress. During this pandemic, we have faced with abrupt changes in our daily lives such as stay-at-home orders, loss of jobs, the closing of schools, and health scares, among other things. These sudden changes can all trigger one's sadness or depression. It is important to remember that some things are beyond our control, but we can develop healthy ways to cope with this pandemic. If you have experienced depression or sadness during this time, this group session could be for you.

### Signs of Depression

1. A depressed or irritable mood most of the time.
2. A loss or decrease of pleasure or interest in most activities, including ones that had been interesting or pleasurable previously.
3. Significant changes in weight or appetite.
4. Disturbances in falling asleep or sleeping too much.
5. Feeling slowed down in your movements or restless most days.
6. Feeling tired, sluggish, and having low energy most days.
7. Having feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt on most days.
8. Experiencing problems with thinking, focus, concentration, creativity, and the ability to make decisions on most days.
9. Having thoughts of dying or suicide.

A diagnosis for depression requires that an individual have at least 5 of the symptoms listed above for at least two weeks. Be advised: The severity of these symptoms should also be taken into consideration, please use these only as a guideline and see a mental health professional for a conclusive diagnosis.

### What is the difference?

- Sadness is usually triggered by a difficult, stressful, hurtful, challenging, or disappointing event, experience, or situation.
- Depression does not necessarily require a stressful event or situation, a loss, or a change of circumstance as a trigger.
- Someone who is feeling sad might cry for a while, spend some time alone, then get back to their routine lives within a short time.
- Someone diagnosed with clinical depression will have symptoms like loss of interest in activities, withdrawal from others, difficulty sleeping, or a drastic change in appetite that lasts for two weeks or more.

### Related Resources

View this video to learn the [6 Differences Between Sadness and Depression](#).

Mental health and substance abuse recovery supports are also available locally:

- 24/7 mental health support on the Hope4NC Hotline - [855-587-3473](tel:855-587-3473)
- Durham County residents can call [Alliance Behavioral Health](#)'s Access Line - [800-510-9132](tel:800-510-9132)
- Orange County residents can call [Cardinal Innovations](#) Access Line at [800-939-5911](tel:800-939-5911)
- [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) and [Narcotics Anonymous](#) are both offering free virtual support groups
- Durham Recovery Response Center - [919-560-7305](tel:919-560-7305)