



10 TIPS

Knowledge is Power

These tips are designed to help you find hope, understand, learn about and deal with mental health issues everyday.

Depressive Disorders

- 1. Participate in your treatment.** You are the expert about yourself. Be actively involved in setting your individual goals and your treatment plan. Your treatment should be based on your needs and goals.
- 2. Treat suicidal thoughts seriously.** Talk openly about any suicidal thoughts you are having with your Care Coordinator, prescriber or a nurse. If needed, get immediate help by calling 911 or going to the nearest hospital emergency room.
- 3. Ask questions.** Ask your Care Coordinator or medication prescriber to explain your diagnosis, treatment alternatives and his/her recommendations. If you don't understand something ask again. Or ask a friend or family member to attend a session with you. Write down questions ahead of time and bring them to the session.
- 4. Be alert to early symptoms.** Symptoms of depression can return. Seek treatment as soon as possible. Ask your Care Coordinator about your developing a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) and crisis plan and share these with family and friends.
- 5. Create support** through family, friends and peer support groups. Ask your Care Coordinator or the Office of Consumer and Family Affairs (303 432-5955) for information about peer support groups in the community.
- 6. Care about yourself.** Establish a healthy lifestyle. Try to get some natural sunlight for a few minutes every day, especially in the fall and winter. Physical activity—even brief walks—can help your mood. Try to do some things you enjoy with other people. Remember that alcohol and illegal drugs can worsen depressive symptoms. If you use alcohol, use in moderation.
- 7. Keep your appointments.** This is your time—use it effectively. If you take an antidepressant medication, take it regularly, even if you are feeling better. Call your prescriber if you have any questions or have uncomfortable side effects. Ask about medications which may have fewer side effects.
- 8. Practice skills you learn.** Often therapy for depression involves learning new ways to thinking about events and experiences in your life. Complete homework you are given. Practice helps when learning these new skills.
- 9. Be hopeful. Set personal goals.** Remember that people with depressive illness can and do recover and live full and productive lives.
- 10. Learn about depressive illness** and how people recover from mental illness. Ask for written materials, read information on the internet or from the library. Two places to start are the National Institute of Mental Health (1.800.421.4211 or www.nimh.nih.gov) and the FBH website, www.fbhcolorado.org.

Developed in Collaboration with FBH Providers & the Consumer and Family Advisory Board



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