

## Feeling Blue? You have the power to change

Source: Publication "Beating the Blues" prepared by:

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Depression is one of the most common problems people face today. However, few people know how to deal with it.

Depression is an emotional state of feeling sad, lonely, and dejected, a state that can be either a temporary down mood or a lingering, debilitating, unshakable feeling that life is futile. It is often accompanied by fatigue, headaches, and other physical symptoms.

The following signs are indicative of a depressed person, according to the National Institute of Mental Health:

- *Unhappy feelings*—Feeling sad, hopeless, worthless, discouraged or listless.
- *Negative thoughts*—"I'm a failure!" "No one cares about me."
- *Reduced activity*- Sitting around and moping
- *People problems*—"I don't want anybody to see me." "I feel so lonely."
- *Guilt and low self-esteem*—"It's all my fault." "I should be punished."
- *Mental agitation*—Hostility, irritability, fear, worry, and an inability to concentrate.
- *Appearance*—Sad face, slow movements, unkempt look.
- *Physical problems*—Sleeping problems, either too much or not enough; weight loss or gain; decreased sexual interest; headaches.
- *Suicidal thoughts or wishes*

If you or someone you know is even mildly depressed, some of these signs will be present. However, sometimes these same signs accompany an illness or an injury

Steps you can take to rid yourself of the blues:

- *Ask yourself these questions.* Do I really want to change?
- *Get busy doing things you enjoy.*
- *Make a "serendipity" file.* It is almost certain that at some time in your life, people have said they like something about you. Jot down that positive comment on a scrap of paper and put it in a box or file. Then, when you feel down, look in your file, and let yourself enjoy the compliments you have received from others.
- *Make a list of things you like about yourself.* Think about and enjoy your positive assets and accomplishments.
- *Attend to your spiritual nature.*
- *Pamper yourself.* Spoil yourself a little.
- *Make a short "To Do" list of activities you can succeed at today.* Break them down into manageable steps if that helps.
- *Think of ways you can improve your health.* Start doing some of them today.
- *Make play a high priority*
- *Reach out and touch someone else.* Give away a dozen smiles