



## Mental Health Matters: Depression.

Good mental health is a positive concept that is related to the social and emotional wellbeing of people and communities. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines it as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to his or her community. However, all over the world, people are plagued with mental disorders which cause immense suffering and one of the most notable ones is depression. Depression is a mental illness that is characterized by feelings of utter despair and hopelessness and it can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems. It can interfere with the affected person's ability to work, study, eat, sleep, and enjoy life. Just trying to get through the day can be overwhelming. Recent estimates show that more than 264 million people across the world suffer from depression. In extreme cases, depression can lead to suicide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), nearly 800 000 people die due to suicide every year and this estimate exceeds mortality caused by war and homicide put together. Depression is currently the leading cause of disability worldwide and is a major contributor to the overall global burden of disease.

### Key facts about depression:

- Humans are prone to mood fluctuations and short lived emotional responses due to challenges of life but this should not be mistaken for depression. Depression is characterized by feelings ranging from worthlessness and guilt to despair and these feelings persist for weeks at a time.
- A depressive episode can be categorized as mild, moderate or severe.
- The percentage of women affected by depression exceeds that of men. This has been the trend since 1990. Records show that 4.12 percent of females worldwide suffered from depression in 2017 compared to 2.73 percent of males with similar mental health issue.
- Women of childbearing age are at high risk of developing depression.
- According to WHO, depression results from a complex interaction of social, psychological, and biological factors. People who have gone through negative life events are more likely to develop depression.
- While there are effective treatments for mental disorders, between 76% and 85% of people in low- and middle-income countries receive no treatment for their disorders.
- Depression tends to affect people in their prime working years and may last a lifetime if left untreated. One major barrier to tackling depression is when affected persons refuse to acknowledge that there is a problem that needs a solution. Some may even resort to suicide if the condition worsens.
- There are also barriers to effective care and they include lack of resources, lack of trained health-care providers, inaccurate diagnosis, and social stigma associated with mental disorders.
- The global economy loses about US\$ 1 trillion per year in productivity due to depression and anxiety.

### Overcoming Depression:

- How an NGO is championing the fight against depression: [Learn more](#)
- How an app is being used to screen, create and recognize symptoms of depression: [Learn more](#)
- Peer Support For Mental Health: [Learn more](#)
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Interventions for Depression Treatment and Mental Health: [Watch now](#)