Are You Familiar With These Lesser-Known Depression Symptoms?

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A Look at Some Lesser-Known Depression Symptoms You May Not Be Aware Of

When people think about depression, they too often picture the middle-aged person lying on their couch all afternoon while gray clouds swirl outside the window. This person is sad, tearful, and still wearing their pajamas. This is often the version of depression many people see.

Although that is a fairly common portrayal of depression, the condition is one with wide variation and vast individual differences. Not all depression is the same. Not all people with depression are the same.

What Is Depression?

Depression is so varied that it is not just one condition. It is a group of conditions known as depressive disorders.

When people say “depression,” they usually are referring to major depressive disorder, but others, like disruptive mood dysregulation disorder and persistent depressive disorder, are included in the category. For the purpose of this article, depression will focus on major depressive disorder (MDD).

Depression is one of the most frequently diagnosed mental health conditions — but misconceptions prevail. Most people will know that low mood is a symptom, but there are eight other criteria that point towards depression for a mental health professional.

These criteria are common but less familiar to the average person learning more about mental health. The other eight criteria of depression are:

- Lack of motivation or low desire
- Low energy
- Changes in sleep/insomnia or hypersomnia
- Changes in weight, which usually presents as unexpected weight loss
- Excessive guilt and feelings of worthlessness
- Thoughts of death and suicide
- Changes in movement, which is illustrated by slowed movement
- Poor attention and concentration

Trouble Concentrating

The final item on the list is one that confuses many. Problems with memory, attention, concentration, and decision-making are related to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) so strongly that people may not consider these symptoms presenting in MDD.

It is true, though. People with depression find themselves with lower levels of focus that impacts performance at

work or school. Relationships with loved ones are damaged by the depressed person's inability to follow through with simple tasks or maintain attention long enough to finish a conversation.

Psychosis

Psychosis is a break from reality. During a period of psychosis, a person might have hallucinations, which are faulty perceptions of the world — like hearing or seeing things that are not there — or delusions, which are seriously flawed thinking patterns and beliefs.

Delusions could focus on grandeur where the person feels especially valuable and important, or they could focus on paranoia where the person thinks others are trying to follow or harm them.

Psychosis is associated commonly with schizophrenia, but it is a lesser-known symptom of depression as well. In some cases, a person's depression will become so severe that psychotic symptoms emerge.

These symptoms will only present during periods of extreme depression, and they will alleviate when depression improves. Psychotic symptoms linked to schizophrenia will be more consistent.

Change in Relationships

Relationships can be affected by depression in other ways. Uncommon symptoms of depression will be noticeable when you observe the way the person interacts in their relationships. Relationship factors include:

Low Self-Esteem

Depression and low self-esteem are connected intimately. The way someone feels about themselves is not always clear to the outside observer, but it can be obvious if you know what to look for.

Someone with low self-esteem can exhibit poor body language and communication styles with:

- Poor eye contact.
- Poor posture
- Speaking quietly or not at all
- Being overly agreeable
- Putting the needs of others before their own

Isolation

Some depressed people will avoid all social interaction or severely limit it to a few people under special circumstances. The decreased socialization can stem from a fear of judgment, a lack of perceived benefit, or other rationalizations.

Overly Outgoing

When depression comes, some will respond in counterintuitive ways. Rather than being more withdrawn, some people will react by being exceptionally extroverted, social, and outgoing.

Usually, this is done in an attempt to improve their symptoms or convince others they are well.

Negative Coping Skills

Being overly outgoing is a good example of someone trying to modify their depression through a behavioral change. Depression is uncomfortable, so people take great measures to adjust their symptoms with the use of coping skills.

Some coping skills are negative, though. They lead to immediate changes that cannot be maintained in the long-term. Engaging in more negative coping skills can be a sign of depression. Negative coping skills include:

- **Drug and alcohol use.** Someone with depression might look to self-medicate with alcohol and other drugs to manage their feelings.
- **Gaining weight.** Overeating could be another indicator of depression. Even though weight loss is expected with the condition, many will overeat in an attempt to improve their mood.
- **Sexual promiscuity.** People seeking immediate relief from their depression may increase their sexual interest since sex is a naturally reinforcing behavior.
- **Overspending.** Buying a new pair of shoes or the latest gadget can make someone feel a pleasurable rush. Some will overspend to combat their depression.
- **Radical lifestyle changes.** Other people with depression will make impulsive or rash decisions related to their relationships, work, or life to escape depression.

Clearly, these changes may only help in the short-term. In time, all of these changes are related to more problems than benefits.

Depression in Special Populations

Depression in teens and adolescents often presents differently than in adults.

Teens commonly appear more irritable and upset than sad. In teens, sleeping and weight changes are more difficult to observe, though, as these factors normally change in adolescence.

Additionally, depression in men can appear differently than in women. Like teens, men are more likely to seem angry rather than depressed.

They often hide their symptoms or engage in negative coping skills to self-medicate. All of the symptoms may not be clearly present.

Other Lesser-Known Depression Symptoms

Below are some additional lesser-known and unofficial symptoms of depression:

- Pessimism and a negative worldview
- Expecting the worst to happen in situations
- Poor self-care with grooming and hygiene habits impacted
- Putting excessive blame on self or others
- Extreme self-deprecation

Depression does have an established set of criteria and symptoms for diagnosis, but that does not mean those are the only symptoms.

Depression has tremendous variety and uniqueness. Understanding the common and lesser-known depression symptoms helps you better care for your own needs or those of people you love.

Whether well known or not, all symptoms should be taken seriously for treatment to be effective.