



SB-YOU: Take Care of Your Mental Health **Signs and Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety** **Karlin Bruegel, PhD, Clinical Psychology**

There are variety of signs and symptoms that could signal depression and anxiety. However, it is important to consider that feeling sad is normal, especially when something that causes sadness recently happened. Additionally, your “normal” may be different from someone else’s. It is also important to distinguish that what may appear to depression and anxiety could actually be signs of medical issues, such as those caused by hydrocephalus or shunt malfunction, or even behaviors related to executive functioning deficits, a learning disability, or some other mental health issue.

Signs and Symptoms of Depression May Include:

- Prolonged or recurrent sadness
- Prolonged or recurrent emotional numbness or emptiness
- Prolonged hopelessness
- Poor self-worth/low self-esteem
- Lack of interest, especially in previously-enjoyed activities
- Lack of motivation
- Decreased self-care and/or decreased interest in self-care/health management
- Self-harm
- Self-sabotage
- Thoughts of suicide or death
- Suicide attempts
- Constant and recurrent negative self-talk (i.e., “I’m stupid and everyone hates me.”)
- Rumination, meaning obsessing over or constantly thinking negative thoughts
- Unremitting and recurrent pessimism or negativism
- Frequent and constant anger or irritation, or frequent angry outbursts or displays of irritation
- Frequent crying
- An inability to cry due to overwhelming fatigue, apathy, or emotional numbness
- Flat affect, or persistent negative affect
- Increased aches and pains (including migraines and/or full-body pain)
- Increased or excessive sleep, or insomnia or decreased sleep
- Chronic fatigue
- Lack of appetite, or increased appetite
- Social isolation
- Other sudden or abrupt changes in thinking, feeling, and/or behavior



Signs and Symptoms of Anxiety May Include:

- Avoidance of 'triggers' and anxiety-inducing situations
- Social isolation
- Reluctance and refusal to leave the house
- Reluctance and refusal to socialize or interact with people one doesn't know well
- Panic attacks, which are marked by:
 - Racing heart
 - Shortness of breath
 - Dizziness
 - Nausea
 - Fainting
 - Mental 'blankness'
 - An urge to fight, flee, freeze, or flop
 - The feeling and/or fear that you are dying
- Obsessive and frequent rumination
- Catastrophizing
- Engaging in 'rituals' designed to pre-empt and prevent problems or anticipated disasters
- Frequent crying
- Frequent irritation or angry outbursts
- Persistent nightmares or night terrors
- 'Flashbacks' to traumatic or upsetting events
- Frequent stress