



# Depression Support Toolkit

A Guide to Understanding and Managing Depression

□ This resource was created with care because your mental health matters. Use this tool to support yourself or someone you love. More resources are available at [kellydholder.com](https://kellydholder.com).

# Understanding Depression

More than 1 billion people are living with mental health disorders, according to data released by the World Health Organization (WHO), with conditions such as anxiety and depression inflicting immense human and economic tolls.

## Common Symptoms of Depression

Persistent sad or empty mood

Loss of interest in activities

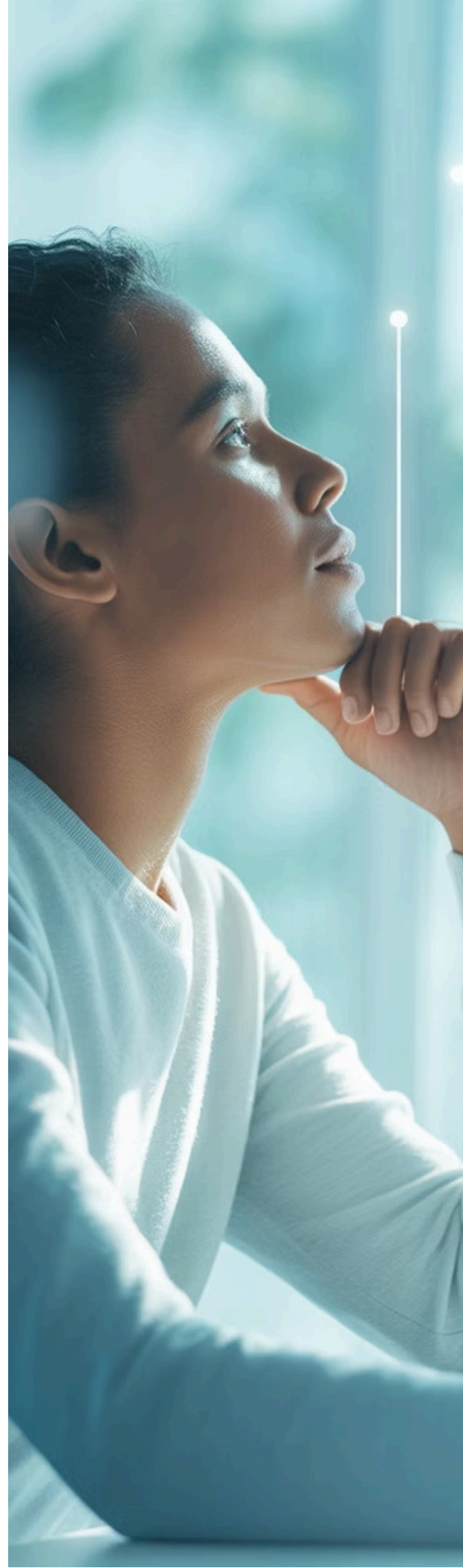
Sleep or appetite changes

Fatigue or low energy

Difficulty concentrating

Thoughts of death or suicide

Source: World Health Organization and National Alliance on Mental Illness



# Why Asking for Help Is Hard

Depression often makes it difficult to seek help due to:

- Feelings of shame
- Hopelessness
- Low energy
- Isolation
- Belief that no one can understand

For loved ones: The person may not feel that anything can help, but change is possible and support can make a difference.


## How to Help a Loved One

### What to Do:

- Let them know you're concerned about the symptoms you've seen
- Listen to them without judgment
- Let them know you care and there is hope
- Suggest resources (listed later in this packet)
- Offer gentle encouragement

### What NOT to Do:

- Belittle their experience
- Argue with them about their feelings
- Minimize what they're going through

 **Conversation Starter:** "I've noticed [specific changes] and I'm concerned about you."





# Medical Treatment Options

It's important to talk with your medical provider, as multiple underlying medical conditions can cause depressive symptoms. Your provider can help rule out physical causes and determine the best treatment approach.

Talk to your medical provider about psychiatric treatment options and medications. Psychiatry is a medical specialty focused on diagnosing and treating mental health conditions.

Medical treatments that work for many people include:

- Antidepressant medications (SSRIs, SNRIs, and others)
- Combination therapy (medication + psychotherapy)
- Other treatments like TMS or ECT for treatment-resistant cases

Key points:

Multiple effective medications are available

Finding the right treatment may take time

Regular follow-up with your provider is important

Medication can be combined with therapy and self-help tools

- ☐ **Note:** Everyone responds differently to treatment. Work closely with your healthcare provider to find what works best for you.



A woman with short dark hair and a man with a beard are sitting in a modern office setting, engaged in a conversation. They are both wearing light blue shirts. The woman is on the left, and the man is on the right. They are sitting on white chairs, and there is a small white table between them. The background is a bright, modern office with large windows and a glass partition.

# How Talk Therapy Can Help

Talk therapy (psychotherapy) is an effective treatment for depression, helping you understand and manage your condition through conversation with a mental health professional.

## Benefits of Talk Therapy:

Provides a safe, confidential space to express feelings

Helps identify triggers and develop coping strategies

Teaches practical skills for managing symptoms

Can be combined with medication for enhanced results

Many people find that regular therapy sessions provide ongoing support and tools for long-term mental wellness.

# Additional Resources & Support

## Professional Help:

- Psychology Today therapist directories
- Inclusive Therapists directories

## Crisis Support:

Available 24/7

☐ Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline)  
Text 741741 (Crisis Text Line)



# Self-Assessment

Mental Health America offers self-assessment tools to help individuals:

- Recognize symptoms of depression
- Understand when to seek professional help
- Take the first step toward wellness



## Take a Free Self-Assessment

Visit: <https://screening.mhanational.org>



Early recognition is key to recovery





# Self-Help Tools

Empower yourself with these actionable strategies to manage and improve your mental well-being:



## Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Skills

Learn to identify and change negative thought patterns



## Mindfulness Practices

Stay present and reduce anxiety through meditation and breathing



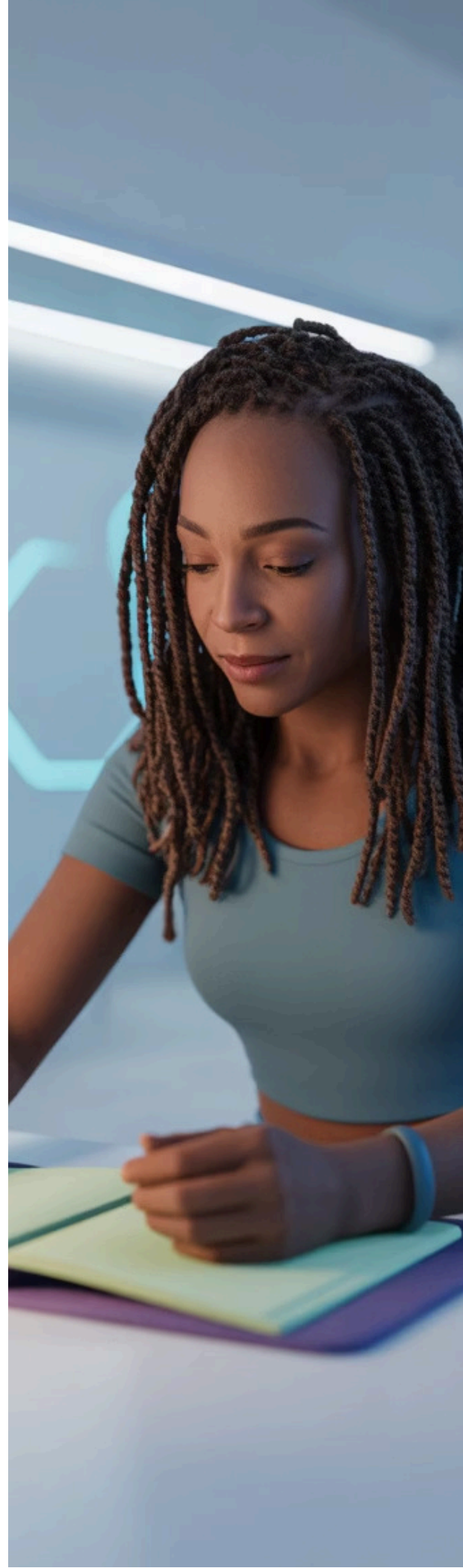
## Physical Activation

Exercise and enjoyable activities (even short periods can help)



## Building Community

Social support and meaningful connections





# Taking the Next Steps Towards Healing

Embarking on the journey to mental wellness requires courage and consistent action. This guide outlines actionable steps to support your recovery.



## Immediate Crisis Help

If in immediate distress or overwhelmed, reach out to these confidential lifelines for support:

- Call or text **988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline)
- Text **741741** (Crisis Text Line)



## Consult Your Primary Care Provider

Your PCP can offer initial guidance, rule out physical causes, and provide referrals to mental health specialists.



## Connect with a Mental Health Professional

Professional therapy offers a safe space to explore feelings, develop coping strategies, and work towards healing. Find a provider through directories like [Psychology Today](#) or [Inclusive Therapists](#).



## Prioritize Self-Care

Integrate self-care into your daily routine: adequate sleep, balanced nutrition, physical activity, and enjoyable hobbies.



## Build Your Support Network

Share your journey with trusted friends, family, or mentors. Support groups offer comfort and understanding; you don't have to navigate this alone.

Remember, taking even small steps can make a significant difference. Your well-being is worth the effort.

- ❑ Visit [kellydholder.com](https://kellydholder.com) for other helpful resources related to mental health, well-being, and developing healthy teams.