

# DEPRESSION ASSESSMENT

USE THIS GUIDE AS A REFERENCE TOOL TO SCREEN FOR CLINICAL DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE RISK.

## RISK FACTORS FOR CLINICAL DEPRESSION

- ▶ Previous depressive episode or family history of depression
- ▶ Multiple or unexplained physical symptoms
- ▶ Chronic pain or chronic illness
- ▶ Recent serious loss or stressful life events
- ▶ Increase in substance use

### REMEMBER

Always ask about alcohol and substance use/abuse.

## TWO QUESTION SCREEN

During the past month, have you often been bothered by:

1. Little interest or pleasure in doing things?  Yes  No

2. Feeling down, depressed or hopeless?  Yes  No

If one or both responses are “Yes,” proceed to a more detailed assessment tool such as the PHQ-9, available at [www.beaconhealthstrategies.com](http://www.beaconhealthstrategies.com).

If the response is “No” to both questions, the screen is negative.

## DSM 5 DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA FOR DEPRESSION

For major depressive disorders, at least 5 of the following symptoms must be present most of the day, nearly every day, and for at least two weeks.

- ▶ **Depressed mood**
- ▶ **Markedly diminished interest in usual activities**
- ▶ Significant increase/loss in appetite/weight
- ▶ Insomnia/hypersomnia
- ▶ Psychomotor agitation/retardation
- ▶ Fatigue or loss of energy
- ▶ Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- ▶ Difficulty with thinking, concentrating, or making decisions
- ▶ Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.

### REMEMBER

At least one of the first two bolded symptoms must be present.

## SUICIDE RISK ASSESSMENT

If you make a depression diagnosis, you must also assess the patient for suicide risk. Remember: questions about suicidal ideation do not promote suicidal action.

If a patient reports current suicidal thoughts with planning, get emergency behavioral health services immediately or call 911.

Risk factors are not predictors of suicide. The following mnemonic aid **SAD PERSONS** may be used to assess for risk factors associated with suicide.

**Sex** (more women attempt suicide, more men succeed)

**Age** (bimodal age distribution <19 and/or >45)

**Depression** (especially with anxiety/panic)

**Previous attempts**

**ETOH** (alcohol or other substance abuse)

**Rational thinking loss** (psychosis)

**Social Supports** (none or limited)

**Organized plan**

**No spouse**

**Sickness** (chronic or debilitating illness)

## TREATMENT OPTIONS

Consider starting a trial of antidepressant medication and/or a mental health referral for psychotherapy.

Call Beacon Health Strategies at **888.204.5581** for a referral to a behavioral health provider. For additional treatment options, visit [www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml).