Being so scared
you're paralyzed
You are a burden
to everyone
Your head is
surrounded by
a thick, black,
unrelenting
fog
Exhausting,
like you're
living in a
cage
Hopeless. Like there
is no person or
thing that can help
you forget
about
everything
that makes
you sad all
of the
time
An overwhelming
sense of sadness
about life and
about all that you
are and all you do

Fighting an
exhausting
battle against
yourself
You need
to hug
someone. But at the
same time, you don't
want any human to
hug you
You have a lump
in your throat, as
if you're about
to cry at any
moment, all
day
Being misunderstood
and ashamed

A needle of
pain pricking at
your body at
every chance it
gets
All you want
is to go
home and
just curl up
and fall
asleep
forever
Drowning and no one
sees it and you feel
helpless against the
water around you
Really terribly
lonely all
of the time

You want your life
to get better, but
everything is so
hard to do and you
have no motivation
It's hard to be
happy, to love
or accept love
You'll never be
happy again, even
when you know
that's not true

A dark, empty
room with
no escape

Heavy and tired, like you're
moving through quicksand

You are a burden
to everyone
You need
to hug
someone. But at the same
time, you don't want any human
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#mentalillnessfeelslike
Share what life with a depressive disorder feels like for you in words, images or video by tagging your social media posts with #mentalillnessfeelslike.

Posts will be displayed at mentalhealthamerica.net/feelslike where you can also submit anonymously if you choose.

- Speak up about your own experiences
- Help others who may be struggling to explain what they are going through to figure out if they are showing signs of a mental illness
- Break down the discrimination and stigma surrounding mental illnesses
- Show others that they are not alone in their feelings and their symptoms

DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS ARE REAL ILLNESSES THAT INVOLVE EXTENDED PERIODS OF FEELING EXTREMELY LOW AND DISRUPT A PERSON’S ABILITY TO ENJOY LIFE. THEY AFFECT:

**THE BODY**
Causing: headaches, changes in appetite which cause either weight gain or loss, constantly feeling tired, body aches and pains, a weakened immune system, and sleeping too much or not enough.

**THOUGHTS**
Causing people to feel: inadequate (like they aren't good enough), extremely sad, guilty, irritable, lonely, empty, pessimistic (having a negative outlook), preoccupied with death or suicide, unable to focus, or unmotivated.

**BEHAVIORS**
Causing: withdrawal from social activities, decreased interest in sex, slowed speech, difficulty finishing (or even starting) tasks, or not keeping up with daily responsibilities.

NEARLY 
7% OF AMERICAN ADULTS HAD A MAJOR DEPRESSIVE EPISODE IN 2014, THAT IS 15.7 MILLION PEOPLE.

ENOUGH TO FILL EVERY MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL AND FOOTBALL STADIUM IN THE UNITED STATES

4½ TIMES

HAVING A DEPRESSIVE DISORDER IS NOT:
- Being sad about a bad situation
- Grieving the loss of a loved one
- All in a person’s head
- Overreacting or being overly emotional
- Something that everybody experiences
- Something that a person just “gets over”
- A pity party
- Being stuck in a rut
- Laziness
- A choice
- A sign of weakness
- A character flaw
SCREENING CAN HELP CATCH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS EARLY—B4STAGE4.

If you think you may be showing signs of a depressive disorder, take a screen at mhascreening.org.

A screening is not a diagnosis, but it can be a helpful tool for starting a conversation with your doctor or a loved one about your mental health.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255), go to your local Emergency Room or call 911.

SOME OF THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS INCLUDE:

- Major Depressive Disorder
- Persistent Depressive Disorder (Dysthymia)
- Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder
- Seasonal Affective Disorder
- Post-Partum Depression

Depression is also a feature of Bipolar Disorder.

To learn more visit: mentalhealthamerica.net/depression

TIPS FOR TACKLING DEPRESSION

- Figure out what lifts your spirits and make a list you can refer to when you start to feel down. Some things you might include: funny websites, movies that make you laugh, looking at pictures of good times, playing with a pet, taking a bath, hiking, puzzles, phone numbers of people you like talking to or places you like to go.

- Get moving to get your body’s feel-good chemicals flowing. Take a brisk walk, go up and down the stairs, or do some jumping jacks. Aim for 30 minutes daily - you can break it up into three, 10-minute sessions to make it easier.

- Remind yourself that everything does not suck by keeping a journal. Take some time each night to write down three things that you’re grateful for, three things you achieved during the day, and/or three good things that happened.

- Make an appointment with a therapist. It might take a while to get an appointment, but once you have that relationship it will be easier to set up appointments in the future. Taking that first step can make you feel like you’ve made progress, give you a sense of control over your condition, and hope for the future.

- If your to-do list seems daunting, take a few moments to determine how much time it actually takes to complete each task. For instance, folding laundry may seem like a real pain, but only takes about 10 minutes. Rather than allowing it to sit and become a big, intimidating laundry pile, you’ll feel a sense of accomplishment in getting it done. Start with quick tasks and build up momentum to taking care of the more time-consuming ones.

- Call someone you trust and ask them to talk to you or even just sit with you. Having a non-judging person present can help you open up, or at least feel less alone. If you can’t get in touch with a friend or family member, go to www.warmline.org to find someone to talk to in your state.

- Challenge your negative thoughts about yourself. Being depressed may make you feel like something you’ve done was horrible, or that you’re ugly, or that you don’t deserve good things to happen. But if a loved one told you they were feeling that way—what would you say to them?

CHALLENGE YOUR NEGATIVE THOUGHTS ABOUT YOURSELF.