

## **Recognizing Depression & Preventing Suicide**

Some of the common symptoms of depression are a dramatic change in sleep habits, lack of appetite, changing moods, loss of libido, increased use of alcohol or stimulants, excessive worry, and irritability or rage. You may exhibit a few or all of these symptoms.

Get the right information. Your local community mental health center will be able to tell you what services are available for depressed persons and provide referrals to mental health professionals in your area. When you have the right information, you will be better able to take action to begin the process of overcoming depression.

The incidence of suicide is rapidly increasing. The Center for Disease Control in Atlanta reports that there has been a dramatic rise in suicide rates in the last 15 years. In fact, incidence of suicide has almost tripled during that time. Those most at risk are people between the ages of 15 and 25.

Because young adults between the ages of 18 and 22 are often living on college campuses where there is often little contact with family members, much of the depressive behavior of students at risk is often overlooked or attributed to fatigue or stress.

While high school counselors are often bombarded by the problems of teens at risk, college students can virtually isolate themselves on a college campus.

Suicide can be prevented, and depression can be treated successfully. People suffering from depression are not capable of altering their chemical balance just by “cheering up” or “listening to reason” or even “knowing that someone loves them.” Their disease often renders them incapable of doing those things. When that time comes, serious help from a mental health professional is needed.