

schizophrenia and depression

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Depression is not a symptom of schizophrenia, but people who have schizophrenia are sometimes depressed as well. Psychotic symptoms like hearing voices or having delusions can also happen when a person has severe depression.

How a person with depression might act

- Talking about feeling helpless or hopeless.
- Seeming depressed most of the day and spends a lot of time crying.
- Not seeming interested in activities, or to enjoy them. The person may not move much at all, but just sit staring into space.
- Being tired and not having much energy.
- Losing or gaining weight.
- Having difficulty sleeping.
- Waking early (like between 2 and 4 am).
- Talking about feeling worthless or guilty. They may have the belief that they have done something terrible and need to be punished.
- Having a hard time concentrating and thinking. Having a hard time putting sentences and thoughts together. Giving very short responses and needing prompting. Note: people with schizophrenia without depression also often have a hard time concentrating, responding and putting thoughts together.
- Talking about thinking a lot about death



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Helpful Things to Do



- Be aware that depression is a very real brain condition and that it is not a reflection of being weak. You cannot cheer the person up out of this state.
- Be aware of suicide risk. If you are concerned, do not be afraid to talk to the person about suicide – this will not make them act on possible thoughts of suicide. Talk with their mental health team if you think your loved one might be thinking about suicide. This issue may be a reason for hospitalisation
- If the person seems unexpectedly happy and begins to give possessions away and organise their affairs, be aware that this is a risk factor for suicide and get help immediately.
- Poor concentration from depression can cause safety issues. For example a person may be more likely to have accidents if they work with knives or drive.
- Be aware of whether the person is drinking enough water or eating properly. This person may need to go to hospital for help with this.
- Connect with how the person is feeling rather than trying to change their mind eg ‘It must be very hard feeling so low’
- Let the person know that you care about them.
- Try to sit beside the person or be nearby – often people who are depressed do not like to make demands on others but they appreciate company. Likewise, you may need to do the talking rather than expecting the person to do so.
- Let the person know where you are going, even if there is no response.

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You don't have to deal with this alone. Help is available.

Please phone 811 or visit HealthLinkBC.ca to find out about services to help with mental illness.