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BREAKING DOWN COMMON MYTHS ABOUT DEPRESSION



It's time to break down some common myths and stigmas about depression that prevent people from talking about it and reaching out for help.

MYTH: "Can't you just snap out of it?"

A common refrain to many living with depression is to "be positive," "look on the bright side" or "snap out of it" – as if it is a choice. It is not a choice; depression is a medical condition.

MYTH: "Your life is good, you have nothing to be depressed about."

Although common phrases like "it could be worse" or "what exactly are you depressed about" may be well-intended, they reinforce the myth that depression is a choice. Depression is a medical condition as serious as any physical affliction, caused by a variety of external and internal factors, such as brain chemistry, genetics, trauma, and past abuse. Depressive symptoms are often out of a sufferer's control and should be taken seriously.

MYTH: People with depression are just lazy.

Depression affects people in different ways, but it is not a sign of weakness or laziness. It can manifest as lethargy and a lack of energy to complete even mundane tasks, but depression can also look like:

- Maintaining normal routines and hiding depressive feelings

- Lack of engagement, apathy, being "checked out"
- Increased anger and irritability
- Loss of interest in activities that used to spark joy
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Overeating or appetite loss

MYTH: Men don't get depression.

It is estimated that 6 million men in America deal with depression, and one in three men meet the criteria for the mental health condition. Unfortunately, male depression often goes undiagnosed for multiple reasons: men are less likely to recognize the signs of depression, less likely to admit they are experiencing depressive symptoms, and less likely to seek treatment for mental health concerns.

MYTH: Depression is just sadness all the time.

Depression is not just 'feeling sad' or 'feeling blue' – there are multiple symptoms, multiple types of depression, and everyone can be affected differently. Sometimes is unexplained physical pain/joint pain, mental fog, lethargy, struggling to sleep, apathy or loss of interest, even increased anger and irritability. More than just a bad day or bad week, these symptoms would have to persist over time.

MYTH: Talking about it makes it worse.

Bottling feelings of depression can exacerbate underlying issues and ignoring symptoms of depression in others only serves to further isolate that person. Talking it out and receiving steady support and empathetic listening can help.

Don't suffer in silence. Speak to a licensed mental health professional through ACI's employee assistance program (EAP). ACI's EAP is prepaid by your organization, free to use, 100% confidential and open to family members. Contact ACI Specialty Benefits at 855-RSL-HELP, rsli@acieap.com, or through the myACI Benefits mobile app.