

Women in Pain: Dealing With Depression

We all know women who are suffering with life issues that are either beyond their control or in some way self-induced.

Depression is an actual illness that can affect the body, the mood or the thoughts. It eventually affects how a person eats or sleeps, how she feels about herself or the way she thinks. Without treatment, the symptoms of **depression** can last for weeks, months or years.

Experts estimate that about 15 million people experience **depression** each year, and the majority of those are **women**. Unfortunately, almost two-thirds of those suffering do not get the help they need.

Consider these statistics for women:

- One in four women will experience severe **depression** at some point in her life.
- Depression affects twice as many women as men, regardless of racial and ethnic background or income.
- Depression is the No. 1 cause of disability in women.¹

The more common symptoms of depression are a depressed mood; a marked, diminished interest or pleasure in activities; weight loss or gain; insomnia or hypersomnia (oversleeping); agitation or retardation of thinking and memory; fatigue or loss of energy; impaired concentration and indecisiveness; or recurring thoughts of death or suicide.

Especially during the holidays, women are prone to depression, as they deal with increased demands for shopping, baking, decorating, entertaining and balancing family holiday activities and relationships with family members.

So how do we help women who are in depression? Bev Hislop, in *Shepherding Women in Pain*, says this: "In the case of handling depression, knowledge is power. The more the depressed woman and her caregiver know, the less fear they will feel. Knowing the symptoms of depression will enable a woman to more clearly discern if she meets the criteria for depression. First, rule out physical causes. Secondly, know referrals and resources."²

You can read more about some do's and don'ts for ministering to a woman in depression here.

One important key to helping a depressed woman is to help her put effort into ministering to those around her. If she can do that, she will not be as focused on her own problems. She can begin to sense God's love for her as she shows love to those around her. Your encouragement and prayer will help give hope to a woman experiencing depression.

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¹ [depression/guide/depression-women](#)

² Hislop, Bev. *Shepherding women in pain: real women, real issues, and what you need to know to truly help* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 67-70.