

# Major Depressive Disorder

We know that as a parent/caregiver you are not mental health professional, so we put together this resource to provide you with the DSM-5 criteria that mental health professionals use to make a diagnosis for depression.

Depression (major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Fortunately, it is also treatable. Depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease your ability to function at work and at home. The DSM-5 diagnostic criteria is as follows:

The individual must be experiencing **five or more** symptoms during the same 2-week period and at least one of the symptoms should be either **(1) depressed mood or (2) loss of interest or pleasure**.

- 1.** Depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day. As indicated by subjective report (e.g., feels sad, empty, hopeless) or observation made by others (e.g., appears tearful). (Note: In children and adolescents, can be irritable mood)
- 2.** Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities most of the day, nearly every day.
- 3.** Significant weight loss when not dieting or weight gain, or decrease or increase in appetite nearly every day. (Note: in children, consider failure to make expected weight gain).
- 4.** Insomnia or hypersomnia nearly every day
- 5.** Slowing down of thought and a reduction of physical movement (observable by others, not merely subjective feelings of restlessness or being slowed down).
- 6.** Fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day.
- 7.** Feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt nearly every day.
- 8.** Diminished ability to think or concentrate, or indecisiveness, nearly every day.
- 9.** Recurrent thoughts of death (not just fear of dying), recurrent suicidal ideation without a specific plan, or a suicide attempt or a specific plan for committing suicide.