



DEPRESSION

Clinical Depression is one of the most costly disabilities in the workplace today. Depression tends to affect people in their prime working years and may last a lifetime if untreated. More than 80 percent of people with Clinical Depression can be successfully treated. With early recognition, intervention, and support, most employees can overcome clinical depression and pick up where they left off.

Know The Facts

- Depression ranks among the top three workplace issues for employee assistance professionals, following only family crisis and stress.
- 3% of total short term disability days are due to depressive disorders and in 76% of those cases, the employee was female.
- The annual economic cost of Depression in 1995 was \$600 per depressed worker. Nearly one-third of these costs are for treatment and 72% are costs related to absenteeism and lost productivity at work.
- Almost 15% of those suffering from Severe Depression will attempt/commit suicide.

Recognizing Depression

Symptoms of depression can include:

- Fatigue / decrease in energy, irritability
- Feeling of hopelessness
- Lack of concentration and memory
- Sleeping and/or Eating Disturbances

In the workplace, depression may be exhibited in the following behaviors:

- Increase in errors in work, decrease in productivity
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Poor punctuality, decreased dependability
- Poor decision-making

Employers and Managers can play an additional role in minimizing the impact of depression:

- Review corporate medical programs and employee health benefits and ensure EAP program staff recognize depression and make appropriate referrals.
- Increase awareness among management and supervisors.
- Obtain and display information about depression at your workplace.

Persons With Depression In The Workplace

Accommodation Examples For People With Psychiatric Disabilities
(From The Job Accommodation Network)

Note: People who have psychiatric disabilities may develop some of these limitations, but seldom develop all of them. The degree of limitation will vary among individuals. Be aware



that not all people who have psychiatric disabilities will need accommodations to perform their job and many others may only need a few accommodations. The following is a sample of possible accommodations available. Numerous other accommodation solutions exist as well.

Maintaining Stamina During The Workday

- Flexible scheduling
- Allow longer or more frequent work breaks
- Provide additional time to learn new responsibilities
- Provide self-paced workload
- Provide backup coverage for when the employee needs to take breaks
- Allow for time off for counseling
- Allow for use of supported employment and job coaches
- Allow employee to work from home during part of the day, or week
- Part-time work schedules

Maintaining Concentration

- Reduce distractions in the work area
- Provide space enclosures or a private office
- Allow the employee to play soothing music using a cassette player and headset
- Increase natural lighting or provide full spectrum lighting
- Allow the employee to work from home and provide necessary equipment
- Plan for uninterrupted work time
- Allow for frequent breaks
- Divide large assignments into smaller tasks and goals
- Restructure job to include only essential functions

Difficulty Staying Organized And Meeting Deadlines

- Make daily TO-DO lists and check items off as they are completed
- Use several calendars to mark meetings and deadlines
- Remind employee of important deadlines
- Use electronic organizers
- Divide large assignments into smaller tasks and goals

Memory Deficits

- Allow the employee to tape record meetings
- Provide type written minutes of each meeting
- Provide written instructions
- Allow additional training time
- Provide written checklists

Working Effectively With Supervisors

- Provide positive praise and reinforcement
- Provide written job instructions



- Develop written work agreements that include the agreed upon accommodations, clear expectations of responsibilities and the consequences of not meeting performance standards
- Allow for open communication to managers and supervisors
- Establish written long term and short term goals

Interacting With Coworkers

- Educate all employees on their right to accommodations
- Provide sensitivity training to coworkers and supervisors
- Do not mandate employees attend work related social functions
- Encourage all employees to move non-work related conversations out of work areas

Difficulty Handling Stress And Emotions

- Provide praise and positive reinforcement
- Allow telephone calls during work hours to doctors and others for needed support
- Allow the employee to take breaks as needed

Attendance Issues

- Provide flexible leave for health problems
- Provide a self-paced work load and flexible hours
- Allow employee to work from home
- Provide part-time work schedule
- Allow employee to make up time Add paragraph
- Recognize that a change in the office environment or of supervisors may be difficult for a person with a psychiatric disability
- Maintain open channels of communication between the employee and the new and old supervisor in order to ensure an effective transition
- Provide weekly or monthly meetings with the employee to discuss workplace issues and productions levels

This information was compiled by Open Door Group to assist BC businesses to have successful working relationship with persons with disabilities in our communities.

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