

# Brighter Days

## Issue 2: Depression: Your Treatment Options

Last month, we shared information to help you better understand your depression diagnosis. This month, we'll discuss the various treatment options available for depression so you can discuss with your provider and find what works best for you.

### Depression Varies

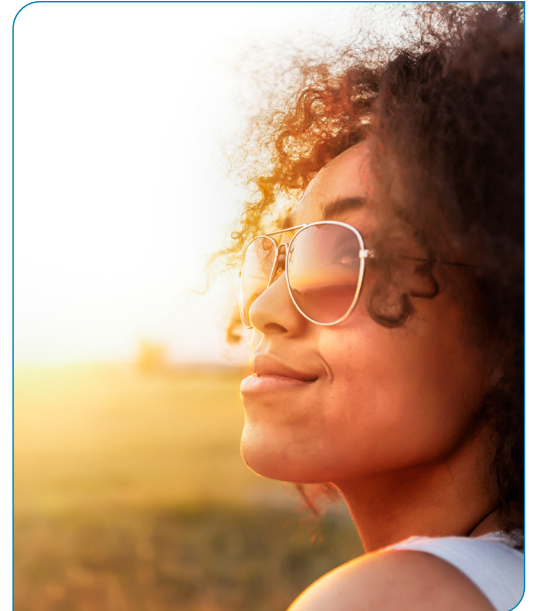
Depression is different for everyone, and so are depression treatments. Many treatment options are available for depression, but how well a particular treatment works depends on the type of depression you have and its severity. Your doctor can review your treatment options and find what works for you.

### Depression Medication

For some people, antidepressant medications may help reduce or control symptoms. In fact, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) reports that roughly 67% of people with depression use medications as a primary form of treatment. Antidepressants often take 2-4 weeks to begin having an effect and up to 12 weeks to reach full effect. Sometimes people will have to try various doses or different medications to find what works for them. Never stop taking your medications without talking to your doctor first, even when you feel better. When you find the right medicine that works for you, take it for at least 6 months for the most benefit.

### Counseling Works!

Medicine helps many of the 19 million Americans who have depression, but it's not the only answer. For many, talking to a counselor is helpful. Several studies show that counseling helps long after the sessions are over. This is because people learn new ways to think and cope. For most people, counseling and medications give better results together than either alone, but this is something to review with your doctor.



### Resources

#### WellFirst Health

For assistance in finding a behavioral health therapist or psychiatrist, call the Customer Care Center number on the back of your insurance card or use the "Find a Provider" feature on [wellfirstbenefits.com](https://www.wellfirstbenefits.com).

WellFirst Health also provides free phone education and resource coordination for members with complex, unstable behavioral health needs. To learn more, visit [wellfirstbenefits.com](https://www.wellfirstbenefits.com) or call our Customer Care Center.



**We are here to help**

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### Peer Support and Psychoeducation Programs

Support groups provide participants an opportunity to share experiences and coping strategies. Support groups may be for the person with the mental health condition, for family/friends or a combination of both. Mental health professionals lead some support groups, but groups can also be peer-led.

Psychoeducation programs involve teaching individuals about their illness, how to treat it and how to recognize signs of relapse. Family psychoeducation is also helpful for family members who want to understand what their loved one is experiencing. Like support groups, psychoeducation programs can be led by mental health professionals or trained peers.

Find a free, local NAMI educational program and/or support group that provides outstanding education, skills training and support at [nami.org](https://www.nami.org).

### Tips For Talking to Your Doctor

You can play an active role in your health care by talking to your doctor. Clear and honest communication between you and your doctor can help you both make smart choices about your health.

Here are a few tips that can help you talk to your doctor and make the most of your appointment:

- Write down a list of questions and concerns before your appointment.
- Consider bringing a close friend or family member with you.
- Take notes about what the doctor says, or ask a friend or family member to take notes for you.
- Learn how to access your medical records, so you can keep track of test results, diagnoses, treatments plans, and medications and prepare for your next appointment.
- Ask for the doctor's contact information and the preferred method of communication.
- Remember that nurses and pharmacists are also good sources of information.

### Other Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:  
**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):  
[nami.org](https://www.nami.org)

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance:  
[dbsalliance.org](https://www.dbsalliance.org)

Anxiety and Depression Association of America:  
[adaa.org](https://www.adaa.org)