

According to the [National Network of Depression Centers \(NNDC\)](#), depression is the leading cause of disability in Americans aged 15 to 44, with the disorder affecting nearly seven percent of the country's population as a whole. Aside from the effects of depression on the individual, mental health issues result in a \$210.5-billion-dollar loss to the economy each year.

Signs of Depression in College

Stress and anxiety are very common during the college years, so how can students know when what they're experiencing is a sign of something more? Here are a few signs that you may be experiencing symptoms of depression:

Persistent feelings of sadness

Disconnected from feelings

Lack of interest in the world around you

Trouble focusing

Guilt

Persistent body aches

Not getting out of bed

Insomnia

Feeling like the world would be better off without you

DepressionToolkit.org from the University of Michigan Depression Center also provides a [depression health questionnaire](#) to help students determine if they're experiencing symptoms of depression.

If students are experiencing these symptoms, they should discuss them with their healthcare provider or other mental health professional. Experiencing any of these symptoms should not be taken as a diagnosis of depression. A healthcare provider can help students determine if they are experiencing any mental health issues and the best course of treatment.

If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts, don't

hesitate to get help. Call 911, go to the nearest hospital or call the

suicide hotline at [**1-800-273-TALK \(8255\)**](tel:1-800-273-TALK).

You can find out more about suicide prevention and resources in our guide to [Suicide Prevention in College](#).

Causes of Depression in College

Because so many life changes take place in college's relatively short time-frame, it's no surprise that many students are especially vulnerable to depression during this chapter of their life. There are many reasons a student may feel depressed, though there isn't always an obvious cause. It can be helpful for students to determine if any outside factors may be contributing to feelings of depression when seeking treatment.

Here are some common causes that can sometimes contribute to symptoms of depression:

Homesickness & Loneliness

Many students are so focused on the excitement of starting college, making new friends and new experiences that they often don't process the significant change happening in their lives until they've been at school for a few weeks or months. Leaving home is a big step in any person's life, and homesickness can hit when you least expect it.

Many students also deal with loneliness – in fact over 62% of college students in a 2017 survey by the [American College Health Association \(ACHA\)](#) said they felt “very lonely” within the last 12 months. It's also normal to feel a sense of loss and mourn childhood; even though many students go home for holidays and summer break, it takes a while to reconcile the fact that you're now an adult.

Financial Stress

Academic Stress

Poor Body Image & Self-Esteem

Drug & Alcohol Use

Social Media Use

Getting Help for Depression in College

According to the [National Alliance on Mental Health \(NAMI\)](#), almost 73 percent of students with a mental health condition experienced a health crisis on campus, but over 34 percent reported their college didn't know about it. Many college students may not know where to get help when they're experiencing symptoms of depression or what they can do to manage their symptoms. Fortunately, there are many resources on and off campus that can help.

Where to Get Help