



Lab A10-8 *Recognizing Signs of Depression and Bipolar Disorder*

Part I. Are You Depressed or Bipolar?

You should get evaluated by a professional if you've had five or more of the following symptoms for more than 2 weeks or if any of these symptoms cause such a big change that you can't keep up your usual routine.

When You're Depressed:

- You feel sad or cry a lot, and it doesn't go away.
- You feel guilty for no reason; you feel you're no good; you've lost your confidence.
- Life seems meaningless, or you think nothing good is ever going to happen again.
- You have a negative attitude a lot of the time, or it seems as if you have no feelings.
- You don't feel like doing a lot of the things you used to like—music, sports, being with friends, going out, and so on—and you want to be left alone most of the time.
- It's hard to make up your mind. You forget lots of things, and it's hard to concentrate.
- You get irritated often. Little things make you lose your temper; you overreact.
- Your sleep pattern changes. You start sleeping a lot more or you have trouble falling asleep at night; or you wake up really early most mornings and can't get back to sleep.
- Your eating pattern changes. You've lost your appetite or you eat a lot more.
- You feel restless and tired most of the time.
- You think about death or feel as if you're dying or have thoughts about committing suicide.

When You're Manic:

- You feel high as a kite . . . like you're "on top of the world."
- You get unrealistic ideas about the great things you can do . . . things that you really can't do.
- Thoughts go racing through your head, you jump from one subject to another, and you talk a lot.
- You're a nonstop party, constantly running around.
- You do too many wild or risky things—with driving, with spending money, with sex, and so on.
- You're so "up" that you don't need much sleep.
- You're rebellious or irritable and can't get along at home or school or with your friends.

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LAB A10-8 (continued)

Part II. Is a Friend Depressed?

The following are signals that a friend may be depressed. Check any symptom that you have noticed that has persisted longer than 2 weeks.

Does he or she express feelings of

- Sadness or “emptiness”?
- Hopelessness, pessimism, or guilt?
- Helplessness or worthlessness?

Does he or she seem

- Unable to make decisions?
- Unable to concentrate and remember?
- To have lost interest or pleasure in ordinary activities like sports or band or talking on the phone?
- To have more problems with school and family?

Does he or she complain of

- Loss of energy and drive so they seem “slowed down”?
- Trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or getting up?
- Appetite problems—are they losing or gaining weight?
- Headaches, stomachaches, or backaches?
- Chronic aches and pains in joints and muscles?

Has his or her behavior changed suddenly so that

- They are restless or more irritable?
- They want to be alone most of the time?
- They’ve started cutting classes or dropped hobbies and activities?
- You think they may be drinking heavily or taking drugs?

Has he or she talked about

- Death?
- Suicide—or attempted suicide?

If you are concerned about depression in yourself or a friend, or if you are thinking about hurting or killing yourself, talk to someone about it and get help immediately. There are many sources of help: a good friend; an academic or resident advisor; the staff at the student health or counseling center; a professor, coach, or advisor; a local suicide or emergency hotline (get the phone number from the operator or directory) or the 911 operator; or a hospital emergency room.