Coping with changes and challenges

If you’re living with depression, how do you cope when a stressful change or challenge comes your way? It might be a serious illness or injury, or even the loss of a loved one.

These steps can help you manage:

**Seek out caring people.** More than ever, it’s time to surround yourself with positive, caring friends and family.

**Stay informed.** If you’re facing a health problem, learn as much as you can about it. Ask your doctor what steps you can take to protect your health and manage your condition.

**Try positive self-talk.** Tell yourself, “Many people cope with this, and I can too.” Or, “Most of my fears won’t come to pass.”

**Reach out.** If your depression gets worse — or you feel overwhelmed — tell your doctor.

Taking care of your body can help you feel better too. You can do this by eating healthy foods and getting enough exercise and sleep.

Sources: American Heart Association (www.heart.org); American Psychological Association (www.apa.org); Mental Health America (www.mentalhealthamerica.net)

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If your doctor prescribed medication for depression, it is important to take the medication on a regular basis. Don’t worry if you do not feel better right away. This is normal. It can take this medication a couple of weeks to start working. If you are feeling better, do not stop taking the medication because symptoms can return and it can take couple of weeks to start feeling better again.

Contract services are funded under contract with the State of Arizona. This is general health information and should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs.

If you would no longer like to receive this mailing, please call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.

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Contact us
Mercy Care, 4755 S. 44th Place, Phoenix, AZ 85040
Member Services: 602-263-3000 or 1-800-624-3879 (TTY: 711)
Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
24-hour nurse line: 602-263-3000 or 1-800-624-3879
www.MercyCareAZ.org

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Alternative therapies and depression

Alternative therapies or medicines are not usually prescribed by a doctor. They’re usually products that can be bought over the counter. They are often found at a health food store.

Many people seek help from herbs, diet supplements and other “natural” products to feel better.

Before trying something new:
• Find out if the product is safe.
• Talk it over with a doctor or other provider.

Just because something is labeled natural doesn’t mean it’s safe. For example, an herb called St. John’s Wort was thought to help depression. However, studies found that it didn’t mix safely with other medicines.

The National Institutes of Health at www.nccih.nih.gov is a good site for checking a product’s safety.

Everyone should make an appointment with a doctor or other provider (such as a counselor or specialist) and let him or her know what product they’d like to try and why.

Being honest about current medicines that don’t seem to be working is good too. Doctors may suggest trying a different medicine.

Doctors can advise on the benefits and risks of using alternative medicines. That can help people make an informed decision.

Source: National Institutes of Health (www.nih.gov)

Ask about Narcan

Opioid overdoses kill people. They can be reversed by a drug called naloxone (Narcan). Anyone can give this drug and save a life. From 1996 through June 2014, it saved the lives of more than 26,000 people in the U.S. You will still need to call 911 after you give it, because it will wear off in one to two hours. To learn more, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)

Did you know that you may be able to get Lifeline cell service plus a smartphone at no cost to you? Go to www.MercyCareAZ.org or call Member Services at 1-800-624-3879 and ask about the Assurance Wireless Lifeline program.

Need help? A care manager can tell you more about depression and help you connect with your provider. Call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.

Share your concerns

If any part of your care makes you uncomfortable, tell your provider. You can also tell your care manager, Member Services, or the Grievance and Appeals Department — even if it seems small. Your comfort and security are an important part of your care. It’s your health care team’s job to make sure you feel safe.