

Understanding Depressive and other Related Disorders

While some depressive symptoms (i.e., sadness) are a normal experience for everyone, depressive and other related disorders are characterized by significant distress or impairment in social, academic/occupational, or other important areas of functioning (e.g., your general ability to function in life).

Some of the most common disorders include:

Major Depressive Disorder: Involves experiencing depressive episodes, which must last for two weeks, and include a minimum of 5 symptoms.

Persistent Depressive Disorder: A less extreme depressive presentation that includes a depressed mood and at least 2 other symptoms that last for at least two years. May have episodes of major depression along with periods of less severe symptoms, but symptoms must last for two years.

Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder: Several depressive symptoms present consistently during the week prior to menses.

Bipolar II Disorder: Includes experiences of both depressive episodes as well as "mixed" or hypomanic episodes (i.e., elevated mood with other expansive symptoms).

Cyclothymic Disorder: Persistent periods of alternating between "highs" and "lows" that are subthreshold for hypomanic and depressive episodes.

Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder: Recurrent temper outbursts and persistently irritable or angry mood for at least one year (present between ages 6-18).