



Sadness - Grief - Depression

It's important to make sure we are using the right words to describe the various parts of mental health and mental illness; doing this helps to improve mental health literacy. Interchanging terms can lead to misunderstandings and misrepresentations of individuals' experiences and emotions.

Sadness

Sadness is a normal emotion that everyone feels at times. It is often connected to a specific cause like a disappointment, setback or argument. Being sad is normal and healthy and is temporary; if it lasts more than two weeks and is accompanied by other warning signs, it can cause impairment and turn into depression over time. Symptoms typically pass after using coping strategies.

Common Symptoms:

- Unhappiness
- Low mood
- Crying

Grief

Grief is a normal response to a tremendous loss: the death of a loved one, friend, pet, job, relationship or a traumatic event. It can accompany any event that disrupts or challenges our sense of normalcy or ourselves. Grief tends to diminish over time with support and processing. But if it lasts and does not get better, it can turn into depression.

Common symptoms:

- Painful feelings such as shock, anger, fear and loneliness that come in waves
- Confusing & conflicting symptoms (sadness that a loved one is gone but relief that they are at peace)
- Fatigue, headaches, upset stomach, restlessness and more
- Unlike depression, feelings of self-worth are often maintained

Depression

Depression doesn't always have a direct cause. It can be triggered by a situation, early experiences, trauma and environmental influences and often affects overall well-being and quality of life, not just emotional state. It is a diagnosable mood disorder that has specific signs & symptoms that last for an extended time - everyday for two weeks or longer. Symptoms may intensify and linger without treatment.

Common Symptoms: (can be mild to severe)

- Sadness or feeling "down"
- Feeling tired & having low energy
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Change in sleep patterns and eating behaviors
- Feeling isolated and removing yourself from social activities
- Feelings of worthlessness & low self-esteem
- Suicidal thoughts

Although they can overlap and share some symptoms, sadness, grief and depression are experiences with different causes and significance. Understanding the differences is crucial to getting the right kind of help, if needed, and to be clear about the language used to tell others how we are feeling. For example, mislabeling depression as sadness can minimize its seriousness and discourage seeking help.

Sadness		<p>Mental Distress</p>	<p>Refers to the common, expected, and normal response to the stresses of everyday life. Mental distress is normal, expected, and happens to everyone. It is necessary for adaptation and building resilience.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing an examination • Having an argument with a friend or family member • Failing at a task
Grief		<p>Mental Health Problem</p>	<p>Refers to the reactions we have to huge life challenges that may task our ability to adapt. Mental health problems may be substantial and prolonged but they are not mental disorders and they do not require medical treatment</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with the death of a loved one • Loss of a relationship, such as divorce • Moving to a new country
Depression		<p>Mental Disorder/ Illness</p>	<p>Refers to clinically diagnosed illnesses. Mental illnesses require evidence-based treatments provided by properly trained health care providers.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Depressive Disorder • Panic Disorder • Bipolar Disorder

<https://mentalhealthliteracy.org/schoolmhl/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/final-using-the-right-words.pdf>

Important Things to Remember:

- There is a difference between sadness and depression.
- There specific signs and symptoms of sadness, grief, and depression.
- Be aware of any overgeneralizations you may make.
- Know what to do to take care of your mental health, no matter what you are experiencing.

If you have symptoms that are interfering with your ability to function in everyday life and that last longer than two to three weeks, seek professional help.

If you need to speak with someone immediately, please text or call 988.
If this is an emergency, please call 911.



Place the facts below into the Venn Diagram.

Symptoms last all day for at least 2 weeks

It is ok to have

It can happen at any age

Needs professional help to feel better

Mental distress

Passes after coping strategies

A mood disorder

Symptoms are both emotional & physical

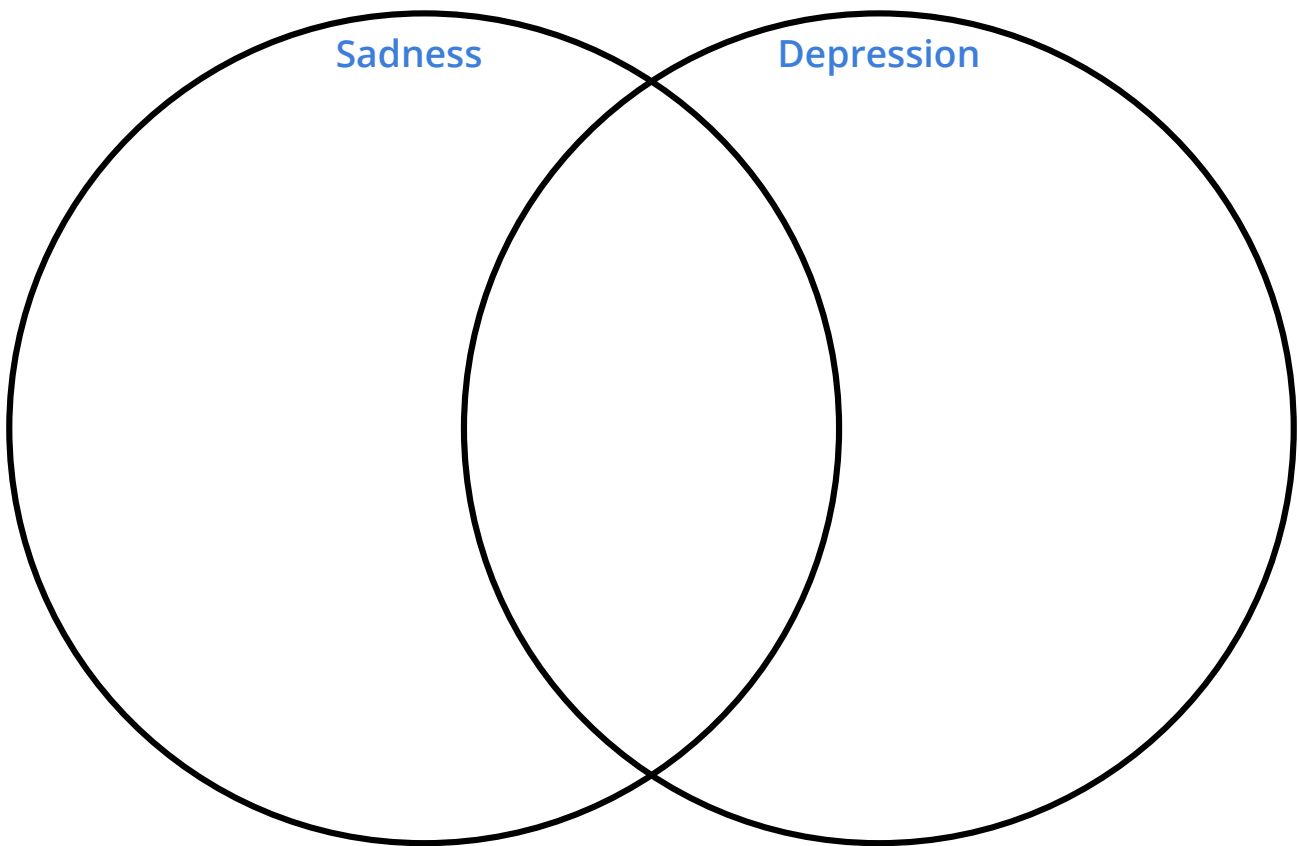
Diagnosed by a doctor or therapist

Most people experience it

Symptoms may intensify without support

May lead to thoughts of suicide

It comes and goes



Fill out coping strategies for sadness, depression and both.

For Sadness

For Depression

For Sadness & Depression