

Discussing Depression With Your Care Team

Why is it important to know if I am depressed?

Depression can often make life more difficult for people living with kidney disease. It can make it hard to take care of yourself, which can make your medical condition worse. Finding out if you are depressed can help your doctor find the best treatment for you.

Patient Fears

It is common for people to be afraid of sharing their feelings with their care team. Most of those fears are caused by misunderstandings or myths about depression. Below are some common fears and the truth to help you see that the care team is there to help and support you. Use this table to think differently about each fear.

Fear	Truth
The doctor will put me on medicines that I'd rather not take.	There are many ways to treat depression and medication is just one of them. Depression is often a chemical imbalance, and just as you would treat headaches or high blood pressure, depression may also be treated with medication. The decision to take medicine is between you and your doctor.
I do not want people to think I am weak or crazy.	Depression is a diagnosed mental health condition many people have. It is not a sign of "weakness" or "craziness." Depression can affect anyone at any time.
I will be told to go to a counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist or social worker.	Just as a nephrologist treats your kidney disease, there are professionals trained to work with people diagnosed with depression. They can be there to help and guide you, but the decision to meet with a counselor or therapist is up to you.

Fear	Truth
I am afraid of what changes I would have to make to get healthy.	You have already made a number of big changes to treat your chronic kidney disease, which may have been hard at first. It is normal to feel uncomfortable, and this will get better when you have a support team helping you.
I do not want to distract the care team from dealing with my physical health problems.	Depression can also be related to physical problems. It is important for your doctor to understand what you're feeling. Your emotional health is just as important as your physical health.
The care team might think less of me if I talk about my depression symptoms.	Anyone can become depressed, even your care team members. Remember, you are not alone. They are there to help you, not just with dialysis. Your overall quality of life is important to your care team.
When I told my care team I was depressed, they did not do anything about it.	If you are not feeling heard by your care team, talk with your social worker or nurse. Ask what steps you can take to get help.

For more information or to file a grievance, please contact:

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