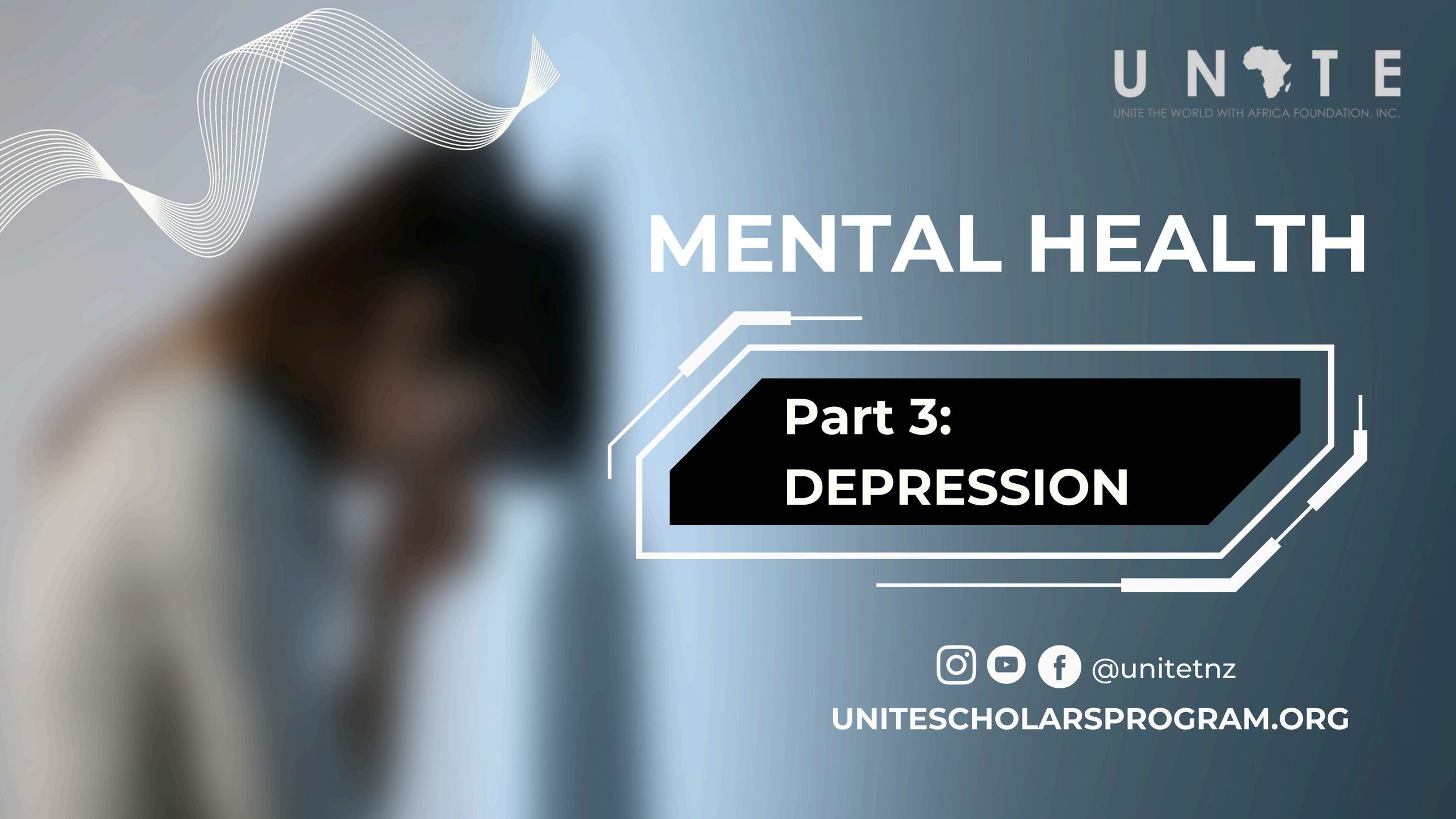


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MENTAL HEALTH

Part 3: DEPRESSION

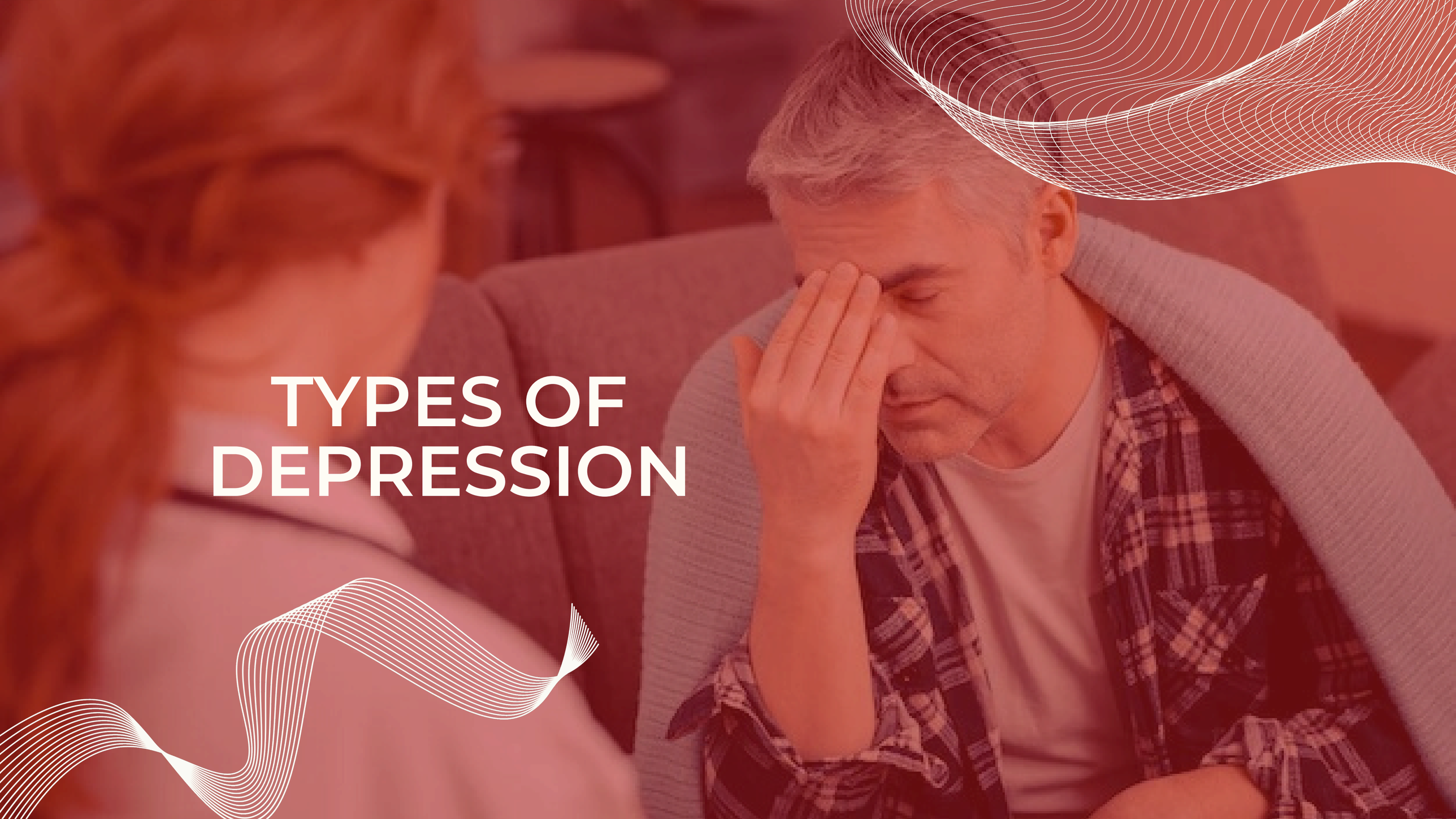
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WHAT IS DEPRESSION?



- Depression is a mood disorder that causes persistent feelings of sadness, emptiness, and loss of joy. It is different from the mood fluctuations that people regularly experience as a part of life.
- Major life events, such as grief or the loss of a job, can trigger depression. But depression is distinct from the negative feelings a person may temporarily have in response to a difficult life event.
- Depression can last for several weeks, months, or years. For many people, it is a chronic illness that gets better and then relapses.



TYPES OF DEPRESSION

MILD DEPRESSION

- Mild depression involves depressive symptoms that are considered low- grade. People with mild, low-grade depression may not even realize they are depressed; however, they still experience many of the same symptoms of more severe depressions, including irritability, sadness, and lack of motivation.
- Despite the symptoms being more subtle and less intense, with mild depression the symptoms are still noticeable enough to interfere with your daily or usual activities.

MODERATE DEPRESSION

- Moderate and mild depression share similar symptoms. Additionally, moderate depression may cause problems with self-esteem, reduced productivity, increased sensitivities and excessive worrying. It is easier to diagnose than mild cases because the symptoms are more obvious and more significantly impact your daily life.

SEVERE DEPRESSION

- This condition characterized by a persistently depressed mood and long-term loss of pleasure or interest in life, often with other symptoms such as disturbed sleep, and feelings of guilt or inadequacy. Major depression may also cause delusions, hallucinations, and suicidal thoughts or behaviors. Sometimes severe depression can go away after a while, but it can also be recurrent for some people.

WHAT TRIGGERS DEPRESSION?

Triggers (causes) are emotional, psychological, or physical events or circumstances that can cause depression symptoms to appear. Major common triggers include;

- **STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS**
  - E.g. loss, family conflicts, family problems and changes in relationships.

- **MEDICAL CONDITIONS**
  - E.g. A medical crisis such as a new diagnosis or a chronic illness such as heart disease or diabetes.

- **ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**
  - E.g. Exposure to trauma or lack of social support.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

LOSS OF INTEREST IN ACTIVITIES

Taking less pleasure in doing things that one usually enjoys.

SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL

Avoiding social situations and losing touch or contact with friends

FATIGUE/TIREDNESS

Prolonged fatigue that makes simple daily tasks, such as washing up and getting dressed feel more difficult.

LACK OF CONCENTRATION AND MEMORY LOSS

Depression may impair thoughts, speech, and memory.

CHANGES IN LIFESTYLE

A depressed person is likely to experience changes in sleep patterns (insomnia) and eating habits.

SUICIDAL THOUGHTS OR ATTEMPTS

This involves having thoughts or ideas or actions around the ending one's own life.

HOW TO AVOID DEPRESSION



The following tips may help people who have risk factors for depression. These tips can also help those who are living with depression manage their symptoms.

- **AVOID STRESS**
  - Get enough sleep and rest. Learn to say “no” to additional demands. Take breaks. Practice breathing exercises and meditation.
- **EXERCISE**
  - Physical activity can act as an antidepressant, and doctors encourage it as a treatment.
- **EAT A HEALTHY DIET**
  - Making sure to eat healthy foods can help prevent depression and boost mental well-being.
- **GET ENOUGH SLEEP**
  - Go to bed and get up at the same time each day, including weekends. Give your body time for adequate rest.
- **TALK THERAPY**
  - This can help people identify the causes of depression and find practical solutions.

TREATING DEPRESSION



- This can range from discussing practical solutions and possible causes to educating family members.
- This may include one-to-one counseling and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which can help fight depressive thoughts.
- Depending on the type of depression, a doctor may prescribe medicines such as antidepressants to assist with treatment.

Using the table below, assess the frequency that you experience these common symptoms of depression.

STATEMENT	ANSWER
I lose interest and motivation to do my daily activities.	_____
I am always sad and unhappy.	
I feel less energetic and drained everyday.	
I feel worthless in my community.	
I prefer staying alone than being with people.	

Using the table below, assess the frequency that you experience these common symptoms of depression.

STATEMENT	ANSWER
I have a big/small appetite.	_____
I always have negative self-image or self-harm thoughts.	
I often lack sleep/sleep too much.	
I feel no interest in talking to other people.	
I have suicidal thoughts/plans.	



SCENARIO 1

Jessica is a 30-year-old office worker who has been feeling deeply sad and hopeless for the past three months. She has lost interest in activities she used to enjoy, such as reading and spending time with friends. She struggles to get out of bed in the morning and has trouble concentrating at work. Jessica has also noticed significant changes in her appetite and sleep patterns.

QUESTION:

In what ways can Jessica be supported to help to manage her depression?

★★★★★



SCENARIO 2

Mark, a 45-year-old accountant, has felt persistently sad and fatigued for several weeks. He finds it difficult to concentrate at work and has been making mistakes in tasks that used to be routine. He feels worthless and guilty, often blaming himself for things that are beyond his control. His family has noticed that he has become more withdrawn and irritable.

QUESTIONS:

- How has Mark’s mood and energy level affected his work performance?
- What specific thoughts of worthlessness and guilt does Mark experience?
- How has Mark’s behavior at home changed, and how has it affected his relationships with his family?
- In what ways can Mark be supported to help to manage his depression?

★★★★★



SCENARIO 3

Angela, a 27-year-old student, has been feeling sad and unmotivated for the past few months. She has stopped attending classes and has lost interest in socializing with her friends. She spends most of her time in bed and has difficulty sleeping at night. Angela feels like there is no point in trying anymore because she believes she will never feel better.

QUESTIONS:

- How has Angela’s depression affected her academic performance and social life?
- What thoughts or beliefs does Angela have about her future and her ability to recover from her depression?
- How does Angela spend her time during the day, and how does this contribute to her feelings of hopelessness?
- Has Angela sought any help or support? If she asked, how could you assist her?

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SCENARIO 4

Megan, a 29-year-old writer, has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder after experiencing several extreme mood swings. During manic episodes, she feels full of ideas and works for days without sleeping, but during depressive episodes, she isolates and can’t write at all. Megan’s mood swings have made it difficult for her to meet deadlines, and she often worries about losing her job.

QUESTIONS:

- How does Megan’s bipolar disorder affect her ability to meet work deadlines and maintain her career?
- What specific challenges does Megan face during her depressive episodes, and how do they differ from her manic phases?
- How has Megan’s bipolar disorder impacted her personal life and relationships?
- What treatment options could help Megan stabilize her mood and improve her ability to function at work?

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