



Depression

Depression is a term commonly used to describe everything from temporary sadness to a serious health disorder that includes behavioral emotional and physical symptoms. Everyone experiences feelings of sadness from time to time; however, depression becomes a disorder when symptoms are present for several weeks and interfere with daily functioning. There are numerous effective treatments for depression, including medications and therapy.

Signs Wingmen Should Know/Look For

- Persistent feelings of sadness.
- Loss of interest in activities that were previously considered pleasurable or important.
- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping excessively.
- Change in appetite or weight (either up or down).
- Poor focus and concentration.
- Feeling fatigued (lack of energy).
- Statements that suggest feelings of guilt, self-criticism, hopelessness, worthlessness, or that one is a burden to others.
- Restlessness, irritability, or agitation.
- Expressed thoughts of suicide or increased talk about death.
- Engaging in unsafe behaviors (reckless driving, driving while intoxicated, or decreased safety practices).
- Increase in errors made at work.
- Apathy at the workplace/decline in work performance (tardiness, reduced quality/quantity of work, arguments with supervisors/peers).
- Changes in hygiene or grooming standards.
- Social withdrawal.

Recommended Wingman Action

- Ask if they have been feeling depressed.
- Encourage help-seeking.
- Ask directly about thoughts or feelings of suicide. If thoughts of suicide have been recently present, escort member to helping agency immediately.

Leadership Considerations

- Ensure the person is safe at the workplace if he/she works in a potentially dangerous environment and/or where a high level of constant focus/concentration is required (weapons bearing, aircraft maintenance, PRP duty, working with electricity, etc.).
- Speak to the member, provide support, and link to appropriate helping agencies
- If the member does not seek treatment voluntarily and depression is believed to be having a significant impact on duty performance or safety, consult with a mental health provider about the appropriateness of a Commander Directed Evaluation.