

STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

Chronic illness & mental health

Chronic health conditions are life changing and often impact mental health, as well as physical health. Chronic illness includes diabetes, lupus, cancer/lymphoma, HIV/AIDS, kidney disease, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and heart disease. The diagnosis of one of these or other chronic health conditions impact the individual as well as others in their life. The psychosocial impact of a chronic health condition includes individuals and family members having a grief experience and increased stressors including time away from work, financial strain, lack of support systems, increased responsibilities related to childcare, time away from family members, loss of contact with those outside of

the family. With such a long list of stressors, it may be no surprise that mental health is also impacted. Research has shown those with chronic health conditions are at a higher risk for developing depression. While it is normal to experience feelings of sadness after receiving such a diagnosis and while dealing the daily challenges, if those feelings last longer than a couple of weeks or increase in intensity it may be depression. If you or someone in your life is managing a chronic health condition additional support may be needed. Support can be found through local or online support groups, family/friends, and medical providers. Those who are experiencing depression or anxiety may need

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- » Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- » Feeling hopeless or pessimistic
- » Feeling worthless or helpless
- » Feeling irritable
- » Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- » Decreased energy or fatigue
- » Difficulty concentrating
- » Difficulty with sleep (too much or too little)
- » Changes in appetite/weight
- » Suicide attempts or thoughts of death or suicide



assistance through counseling or medication. Medical providers can often provide referrals to these individuals. You can also receive help from the EACC for confidential counseling services to address these issues — call 205-934-2281 or visit uab.edu/eacc.