What is Depression?
Depression is a problem common in all age groups. More than just normal episodic mood swings or periods of "being down" or sadness, it is considered an illness in varying degrees of severity.

What causes Depression?
Combinations of factors contribute to depression, including heredity and family predisposition and a person's own brain chemistry, as well as situational or emotional upheavals or stresses. Major depression is caused by chemical changes in the brain with neurotransmitter problems (chemical messengers in the brain).

Triggers might include:
- Coping or non-coping with stress
- Drugs and alcohol abuse
- Major illness, injury, crises such as death in the family or financial crises
- Major life changes
- Certain medications can predispose a person to depression
- Seasonal affective disorder, SAD (wintertime lack of sunshine)

Helpful Hints
- Exercise and sunshine or light therapy
- Review medications with a pharmacist
- Sleep! And a healthy diet

When to call a Health Professional
- If you or someone you know plans to hurt yourself/themselves
- Hear voices or see objects not there
- When grieving or sadness is unrelieved in four weeks and behavior interferes with regular living activities