

The Burns Depression Checklist*

This is the mood-scale, designed by David Burns, M.D., rating bipolar and neurobiological disorders to help a person decide if she/he is suffering from depression. It is not in any way meant to replace the advice of a doctor or therapist. Depression can be a very dangerous illness, so consulting with your doctor is always the best way to go.

Instructions:

To each of the fifteen questions chose one of the following answers:

0 - Not at all 1 - Somewhat 2 - Moderately 3 - A lot

- 1) Sadness: Have you been feeling sad or down in the dumps?
- 2) Discouragement: Does the future look hopeless?
- 3) Low self-esteem: Do you feel worthless or think of yourself as a failure?
- 4) Inferiority: Do you feel inadequate or inferior to others?
- 5) Guilt: Do you get self-critical and blame yourself for everything?
- 6) Indecisiveness: Do you have trouble making up your mind about things?
- 7) Irritability and frustration: Have you been feeling resentful and angry a good deal of the time?
- 8) Loss of interest in life: Have you lost interest in your career, your hobbies, your family, or your friends?
- 9) Loss of motivation: Do you feel overwhelmed and have to push yourself hard to do things?
- 10) Poor self-image: Do you think you're looking old or unattractive?
- 11) Appetite changes: Have you lost your appetite? Or do you overeat or binge compulsively?
- 12) Sleep changes: Do you suffer from insomnia and find it hard to get a goodnight's sleep? Or are you excessively tired and sleeping too much?
- 13) Loss of libido: Have you lost your interest in sex?
- 14) Hypochondriasis: Do you worry a great deal about your health?
- 15) Suicidal impulses**: Do you have thoughts that life is not worth living or think that you might be better off dead?

Add up your total score for the 15 symptoms. It will be somewhere between 0 (if you answered "not at all" for each of the 15 categories) and 45 (if you answered "a lot" for each one). Use the key below to interpret your score:

Total Score -Degree of depression

- 0 - 4 -----Minimal or no depression
- 5 - 10 -----Normal range to Borderline depression,
- 11 - 20 -----Mild depression , clinical depression
- 21 - 30 -----Moderate depression
- 31 - 45 -----Severe depression

* Checklist © 1984 by David D. Burns, M.D., from The Feeling Good Handbook, © 1989.

** If you are having any suicidal thoughts, you should contact a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist immediately.