

# Health And Well-Being

## Tackling Depression Can Lead To A Happier New Year

(NAPSA)—As cheerful and joyous as the New Year can be, it can also be a trigger for stress and depression for some people—but there is hope. There are many resources for people who feel wrung out ringing in the New Year.

For example, Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) can help. MFTs are licensed mental health professionals who work with individuals, couples (married or not), families of all types, and groups to cure or relieve mental, emotional and relational concerns of all kinds.

### How To Recognize Depression

To help you tell if you or someone you care about is suffering from depression, the experts at the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists (CAMFT) offer these warning signs:

- Feeling sad and/or irritable
- Changes in weight or appetite
- Difficulty sleeping
- Feelings of guilt, hopelessness or worthlessness
- Inability to concentrate, remember things or make decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide.

### How To Handle Depression

If these symptoms look familiar, here are some things to do right now:

- **Recognize depression early.** Depression can happen to anyone. It's not a character defect, a weakness or a shameful condition. It's a serious disorder that no one is immune to.
- **Engage in your life.** If you are depressed, you may feel like you don't have an ounce of energy or motivation to tackle depression. Recovery, however, requires your active participation. Be willing to take the first step, even though it's not easy.
- **Build your skills.** Learn why you're vulnerable to depression and



**At New Year's, or anytime, you don't have to let depression get you down. Talking to a therapist can help.**

specific ways to become more resilient by breaking unhealthy patterns of thought and behavior. Developing good coping and relationship skills can reduce both the frequency and severity of depression episodes.

- **Find the right therapist.** Talking through one's stressors and understanding the underlying causes is a proven way to effectively treat depression. Look for therapists with training and experience in treating depression, as well as someone who is warm, supportive and goal oriented. Use short telephone interviews to find a good fit with potential therapists. Ask about how they approach problems like yours.
- **Be optimistic.** You have every reason to believe you can get better with effective treatment. While anti-depressants are not a cure, they can be very helpful to some people in managing depression. Whether or not you choose to use medicine to manage your symptoms, therapy can give you the long-term skills you need to live a productive, fulfilling life.

### How To Learn More

For further information about how to find a therapist, visit [www.CounselingCalifornia.com](http://www.CounselingCalifornia.com).