



# spotlight on health

## Depression: A Condition That Can Strike Anyone

(NAPSA)—Delta Burke made millions of people laugh in her famous role as Suzanne Sugarbaker on *Designing Women*, but off-screen her life was far from funny. For much of her life, Delta has waged a personal battle with clinical depression, struggling first to identify her illness and seek treatment and then to find the right medication that would help her reclaim her life. Delta is now leading a depression awareness campaign called “GOAL! Go On And Live” to help others recognize that they too can get the right help to go on and live life virtually free of depression symptoms.

Delta’s battle with depression began when she was only 16 and reached a critical point when she was 30 and her celebrity status soared with her sitcom success.

“My career was exploding, but my life was a mess,” recalls Delta. “I wasn’t prepared for the sudden fame and started having issues with weight and low self-esteem, which just made my depression worse. This time, though, I couldn’t hide from it anymore.”

Given her public lifestyle, Delta could no longer manage her depression through isolation, her coping method for years. “I used to hide under the bed to escape. Or I wouldn’t leave my apartment for weeks. There were times I felt life wasn’t worth living anymore.”

With the support of a friend and fellow cast member on *Designing Women*, Delta finally began seeking the help she needed in the show’s second season. Like many people with depression, Delta tried a variety of medications and therapists and found that she was making progress, but she still did not feel fully “herself” and wouldn’t settle for anything less. Persevering, Delta and her



psychiatrist eventually found a medication that virtually eliminated her symptoms. With the right combination of medication and therapy, Delta was able to reconnect with the joys in her life.

“It’s important for those suffering from depression to find the right treatment,” said Dr. Norman Sussman, clinical professor of psychiatry at the New York University School of Medicine. “There are drugs that will get you partially better, but if you find the right treatment, remission, or virtual elimination, of your symptoms is truly possible. Then you can really take pleasure in life again.”

Delta has now made it her cause to help illustrate what it means to achieve virtual elimination of depression symptoms and once again enjoy the areas of life that make people who they are, like parenting, relationships, education, working, and volunteering. As national spokeswoman for the GOAL! (Go On And Live) campaign, Delta is spreading the word that depression is not a personal weakness but rather a serious medical condition that can be treated and overcome with the

proper medication, enabling people to “go on and live” again.

Visit the GOAL! Web site at [www.GoOnAndLive.com](http://www.GoOnAndLive.com) to learn more about living beyond depression, or call toll free at 1-888-830-GOAL to obtain a free GOAL! brochure.

### Self-Assessment Quiz

Like many other people with depression, you may be wondering if medication may help relieve the symptoms of your depression so you can enjoy your favorite activities the way you used to. Use this quiz to check how you’re doing.

The self-assessment can help you take a quick look at how you are feeling right now. Simply answer these 3 quick questions.

**1.** Have you stopped doing your favorite activities? (They can be anything—examples include walking your dog, going skating with friends, cooking the family dinner on Sundays, going to the gym.)

- ( ) Yes, I have stopped most of my activities  
 ( ) I have stopped some of my activities  
 ( ) No, I have not stopped any of my activities

**2.** Do any of the following problems affect your life? (Check all that apply.)

- Yes, Sometimes, No
- Unhappy most of the time ( ) ( ) ( )
  - Low energy ( ) ( ) ( )
  - Difficulty connecting with others ( ) ( ) ( )
  - Sleep problems ( ) ( ) ( )
  - Poor concentration ( ) ( ) ( )
  - Change in appetite ( ) ( ) ( )
  - Crying episodes ( ) ( ) ( )
  - Lack of motivation ( ) ( ) ( )
  - Frequent headaches ( ) ( ) ( )
  - Constant worry ( ) ( ) ( )

**3.** On a scale of 1 to 10, circle the number that best represents the way you’ve felt over the past week, including today.

- |       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |      |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1     | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10   |
| Worst |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | Best |
| I’ve  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | I’ve |
| Felt  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | Felt |

If you find that you are not feeling the way you would like, you should discuss your answers to this quiz with your doctor. He or she may have some helpful advice on how you can begin to feel like yourself again.

