The 9 Markers of Depression

1. Depressed Mood / Inescapable Sadness
Depression may be indicated when a person feels extremely sad most of the time, nearly every day during at least a 2 week period. A depressed mood may be observed by others or expressed by the individual. In children and teens, depression also may present as an irritability.

2. Diminished Interest in Activities
Strong feelings of apathy or an inability to experience pleasure in most previously-enjoyed activities, along with a depressed or irritable mood can indicate depression. In a person who is depressed, these feelings are present most days during at least a two-week period.

3. Unexplained Weight Loss or Gain
Significant (more than 5 percent of body weight in a month) unintentional weight loss or gain, or decrease or increase in appetite nearly every day may be a sign of depression. Children who are depressed may fail to make expected growth-related weight gains.

4. Insomnia or Extreme Sleepiness
A person who is depressed may have difficulty falling asleep or may wake frequently during the night. Excessive sleepiness nearly every day for at least 2 weeks also may be a sign of depression.

5. Psychomotor Symptoms
These signs of depression are characterized by unintentional and purposeless motions, like pacing, hand-wringing or hair-twirling, or by a noticeable slowing of the thought process, emotional reactions or movement. Psychomotor agitation and psychomotor retardation observed by others nearly every day for at least 2 weeks may indicate depression.

6. Fatigue
Unexplained feelings of fatigue or a lack of energy nearly every day for a period of at least 2 weeks can be a sign of depression. Depression-related fatigue is not associated with another cause, such as an increase in physical activity or another medical condition.

7. Feelings of Guilt or Worthlessness
Excessive or inappropriate guilt or strong feelings of inadequacy can signal depression. In a person who is depressed, these feelings occur nearly every day and can be extreme enough to be delusional. Guilt is not merely self-reproach or related to being sick.

8. Diminished Ability to Concentrate
A sharp decrease in focus or concentration can be a sign of depression. People who are depressed often notice an inability to think clearly. In some cases, a lack of focus is observed by others, such as family members, friend or co-workers.

9. Suicidal Ideation
About 60 percent of people who are depressed have recurring thoughts of death and roughly 15 percent commit suicide. A person suffering from depression may have frequent thoughts of suicide, develop a plan for committing suicide, or attempt suicide.