Most people hate feeling depressed. They wish it would just go away. The key to start feeling better is to focus on how you treat yourself when you are depressed. It is important to understand how you may be rejecting yourself and your depressed feelings. Resisting depression, or anything else that you do not want for that matter, actually maintains it. Compassionate acceptance of our feelings and ourselves, especially those parts of us that we do not like too much, allows us to grow as a person and to overcome the obstacles that often face us in our lifetime.

Consider this – The state of depression may not the problem.... What is underlying the depression may be the problem. If you are depressed, ask yourself, —What am I feeling depressed about?

When depressed —
You do not want to deny the experience nor do you want to indulge it.

Each time you are depressed —
Stop and turn your attention inward. This might be scary, uncomfortable or unusual, but understanding what you are depressed about and learning to accept this part of yourself may be just what you need to do to start feeling better.

Imagine that you are someone you have no reason to dislike. Pay attention to your feelings and begin to write them down. Express your feelings in whatever way. Stay with yourself, this person you like, until you express everything you need to express. Go through all the feelings that arise until it seems like you get to the end of it.
Wait a minute! This sounds crazy to me. I’m depressed over these things for a reason. What’s the point of expressing them? The point is that when you do this kind of processing, you will begin to see patterns. You will begin to see the steps you take that lead to self-rejection and depression. You will notice your fears, assumptions, and conditioned reactions to circumstances. It may begin to become clear that depression is something that happens to you because of these patterns and that you can tackle it.

You can do this for yourself. Look deep inside for your courage. It is inside you mixed in with everything you are trying to dismiss, avoid, depress. You may notice that the first and last thing you encounter, when being present with yourself, is fear. We’re often afraid of how we feel, afraid of who we are.

The only way we can know what is going on is to sit down with an open mind and pay attention. If we watch closely enough, we notice that there are sensations in our bodies that go with depression. They don’t vary. They are the same every time. We have a labeling system that goes with those sensations. In this case, the label is depression. With this label comes a learned response, the self-talk - everything we have been taught to believe about depression:

- What it is
- What it means
- What will happen as a result
- How the future will be

Make a list of the things you noticed you’ve been depressed over or avoiding and discuss them with a medical or mental health professional. Start gently. Be kind to yourself.

If this is how you feel or are unsure, the Office of Employee Assistance (OEA) can help you explore further. If you want to investigate further on your own, you may use the OEA’s online mental health screening program.
Within a very brief few minutes, the online program will produce a report based on the selected answers and it will be immediately available to save, print or email.

Beyond the report, the program will offer recommendations, suggest related resources, articles and information that will help in taking the next step.

Early detection, assessment, and connection with treatment can have a significant impact on individuals experiencing mental health issues.

To learn more about this new service and have a first-hand experience with the program simply click here: http://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/FIUOE

If you or your family member take a screening and the recommendations point you in the direction of getting professional help, please call the Office of Employee Assistance at 305-248-2469 and let us help you.

October is World Mental Health Month