

# DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS OVERVIEW

- Specify the type of depressive disorder – major, bipolar, situational (grief, stress, etc.)
- Assess and document the severity or status of symptoms – mild, moderate, severe, in remission
- Document chronic behavioral health conditions when they impact care, even when asymptomatic or stable

## Clinical Concepts

Depressive disorders encompass a range of clinical conditions characterized by persistent distress and impairment, with symptoms affecting mood, energy, and cognitive functions. Clinical symptoms of depression include:

- Dysphoria (depressed mood)
- Anhedonia (decreased interest or pleasure in activities previously considered enjoyable)
- Unintended change in appetite or weight
- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Psychomotor agitation or significant slowing
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
- Poor concentration or new indecisiveness
- Recurrent thoughts about death or suicide

Severity depends on number and type of symptoms, frequency, duration, and functional impact. Standardized tools like the PHQ-9 help clinicians determine severity and guide treatment decisions.

PHQ-9 Score	Severity	Result
0-4	Minimal	Not depressed or in remission
5-9	Mild	Consider a depressive disorder; evaluate treatment options and follow-up
10-19	Moderate	Warrants active treatment with pharmacotherapy/psychotherapy and follow-up
20-27	Severe	Increased suicide risk or presence of psychosis; refer to behavioral health specialist

\*PHQ-9 score  $\geq 10$  suggestive of MDD

**Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)** – an episode of clinically significant distress or impairment that persists for a minimum of 2 weeks, involving  $\geq 5$  symptoms of clinical depression *occurring nearly every day*, at least one of which is dysphoria or anhedonia.

**Persistent Depressive Disorder (dysthymia)** – dysphoria and at least 2 other depressive symptoms *occurring on most days* for at least 2 consecutive years.

**Bipolar Disorder** – mood episodes that include mania or hypomania in addition to major depression.

**Adjustment Disorder with Depressed Mood** – symptoms do not meet criteria for a specific depressive disorder and occur in response to an identifiable psychosocial stressor; typically resolves within 6 months of onset.

## Documentation Matters

**History** – record the onset date, note whether depressive symptoms are currently present, document any prior medical treatments or mental health hospitalizations, and identify any social or environmental factors that may affect mood.

**Exam** – document the presence of objective findings such as flat affect, weight loss/gain, somatic symptoms, and related assessment results, such as PHQ-9 scores.

**Assessment** – document the depression diagnosis to the highest level of specificity known. Include the current status/severity of the condition and link any causal conditions or comorbidities impacting mood.

**Plan** – document the treatment or management plan and the timeframe for reevaluation or follow-up. Link associated prescription medications, specialist referrals, and lifestyle management recommendations.

## Coding Guidance

To be reported on a claim, documentation must indicate that a mental health disorder was addressed during the encounter or demonstrate that the condition had an impact on patient care or management.

The terms “depression,” “chronic depression,” and “clinical depression” are too vague for accurate code assignment without further clarification.

Anxiety and depression are to be coded as separate conditions unless documentation specifically indicates they are linked as a single disorder.

## References

[ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding & Reporting Up to Date: Depression in Adults](#)

### Depressive Disorder Diagnoses

ICD-10-CM	Code Description	HCC Model
F31.30	Bipolar disorder, current episode depressed, severity unspecified	CMS/HHS
F31.31	Bipolar disorder, current episode depressed, mild	CMS/HHS
F31.32	Bipolar disorder, current episode depressed, moderate	CMS/HHS
F31.4	Bipolar disorder, current episode depressed, severe without psychotic features	CMS/HHS
F31.5	Bipolar disorder, current episode depressed, severe with psychotic features	CMS/HHS
F31.75	Bipolar disorder, in partial remission, most recent episode depressed	CMS/HHS
F31.76	Bipolar disorder, in full remission, most recent episode depressed	HHS
F32.0	Major depressive disorder, single episode, mild	-
F32.1	Major depressive disorder, single episode, moderate	CMS
F32.2	Major depressive disorder, single episode, severe without psychotic features	CMS/HHS
F32.3	Major depressive disorder, single episode, severe with psychotic features	CMS/HHS
F32.4	Major depressive disorder, single episode, in partial remission	-
F32.5	Major depressive disorder, single episode, in full remission	-
F32.9	Major depressive disorder, unspecified	-
F32.A	Depression, unspecified	-
F33.0	Major depressive disorder, recurrent, mild	-
F33.1	Major depressive disorder, recurrent, moderate	CMS
F33.2	Major depressive disorder, recurrent, severe without psychotic features	CMS/HHS
F33.3	Major depressive disorder, recurrent, severe with psychotic features	CMS/HHS
F33.41	Major depressive disorder, recurrent, in partial remission	-
F33.42	Major depressive disorder, recurrent, in full remission	-
F34.1	Dysthymic disorder (persistent depressive disorder)	-
F43.21	Adjustment disorder with depressed mood	-
F43.23	Adjustment disorder with mixed anxiety and depressed mood	-
F43.81	Prolonged grief disorder	-

### Additional Diagnoses to Consider

ICD-10-CM	Code Description	HCC Model
F01*- F03*	Dementia with mood disturbance	CMS
F06.3*	Mood disorder due to known physiological condition • Specify causal condition	-
F10*- F19*	Substance use disorder with substance-induced mood disorder	CMS/HHS
Z59*	Problems related to housing and economic circumstances	-
Z60*	Problems related to social environment	-
Z62*	Problems related to upbringing	-
Z63*	Problems related to primary support group, including family circumstances	-
Z91.4*	Personal history of psychological trauma, not elsewhere classified	-
Z91.51	Personal history of suicidal behavior	-
Z91.52	Personal history of nonsuicidal self-harm	-

\*Additional characters needed to complete code