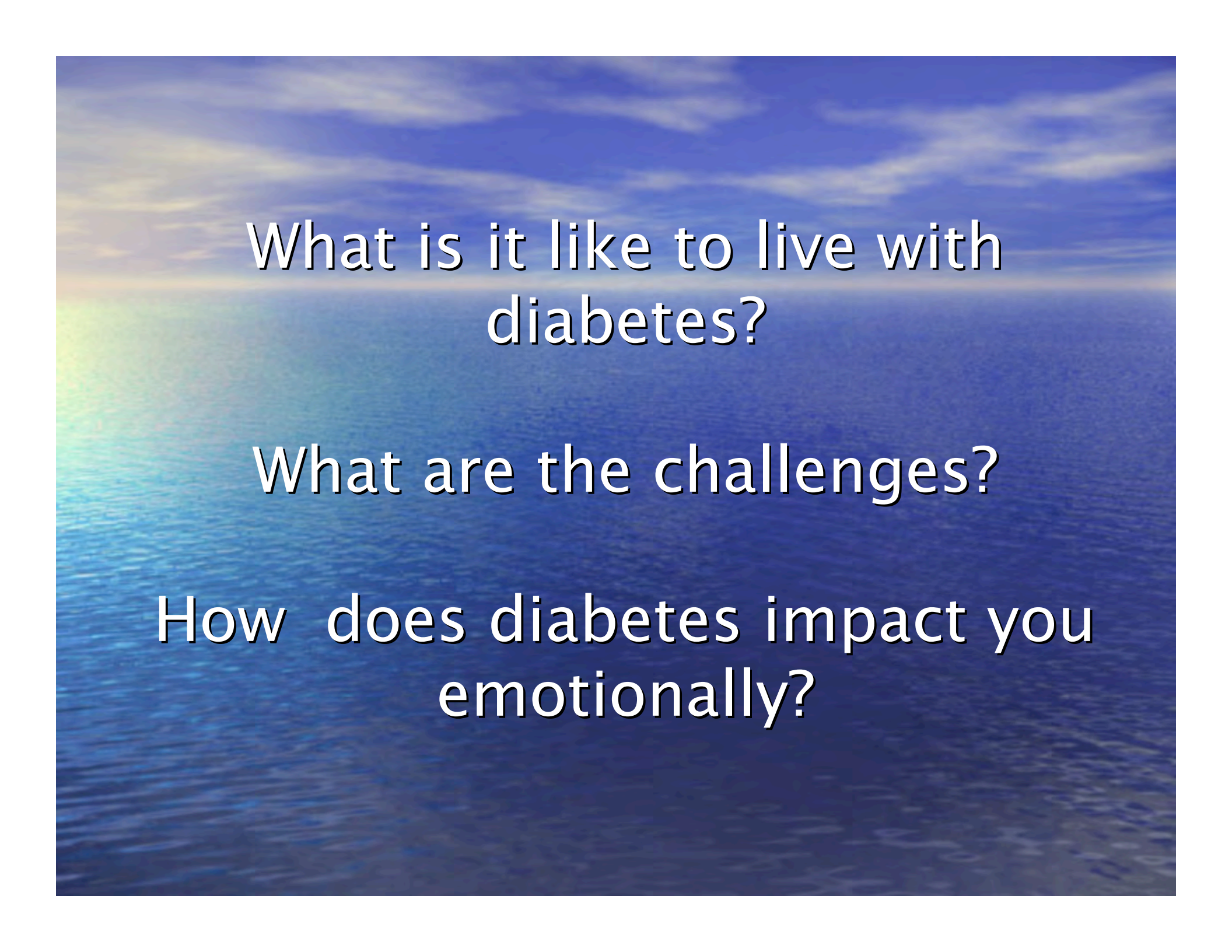




Coping with Stress, Depression & Diabetes

Dorene P. Fick, LCSW
Psychological Health * Roanoke
Advantage EAP



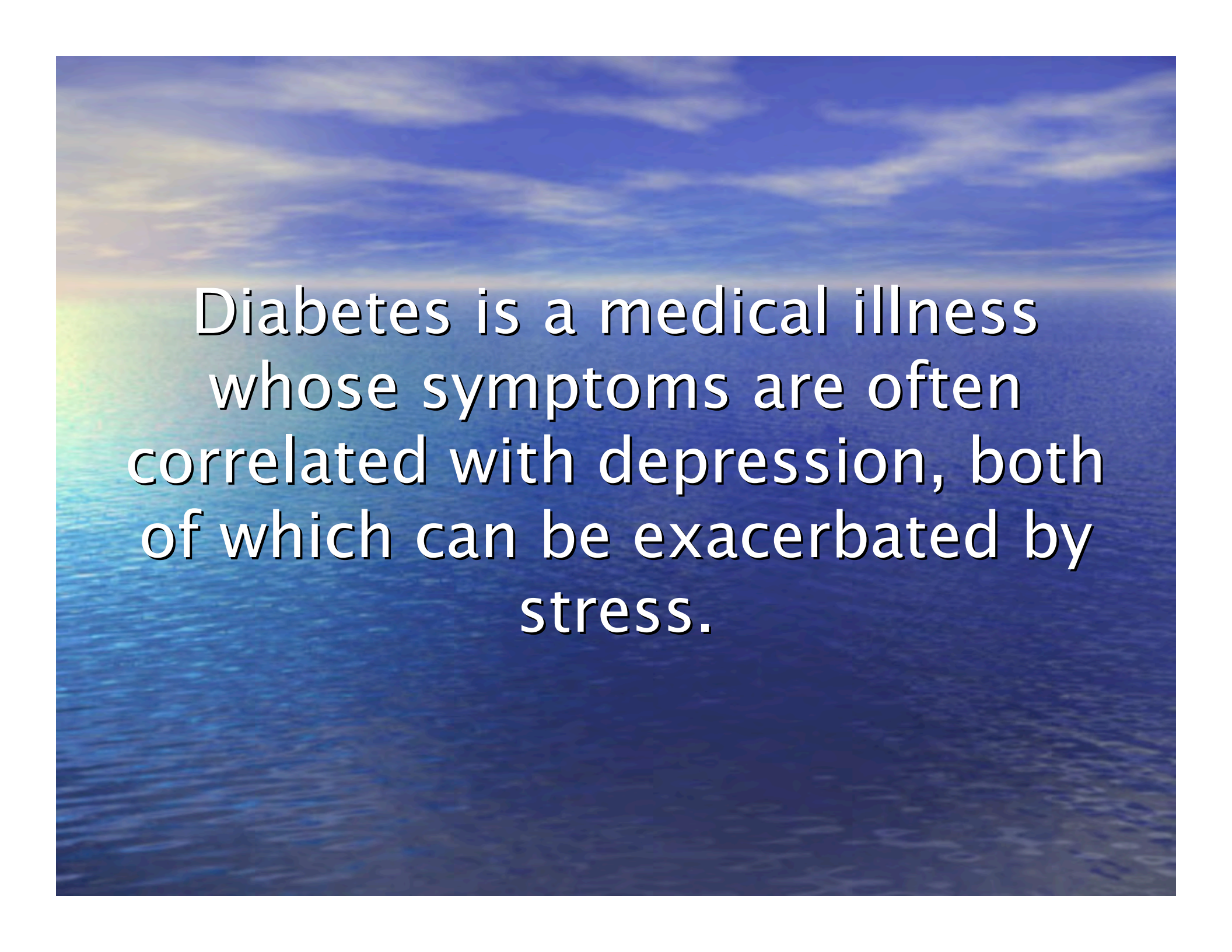
What is it like to live with
diabetes?

What are the challenges?

How does diabetes impact you
emotionally?

Defining diabetes

- Type I – absolute lack of insulin; autoimmune disorder in which the body attacks its own pancreas. The pancreas makes insulin, the hormone that controls blood sugar.
- Type II – relative lack of insulin; chronic illness in which the body cannot properly remove sugar from the blood.



Diabetes is a medical illness whose symptoms are often correlated with depression, both of which can be exacerbated by stress.

Diabetes

Depression

Stress



The Stress factor

- Stress is the pressure, tension or anxiety you feel when faced with a situation that is unpleasant or threatening.
- Any event that creates within our body a physiological reaction similar to that of fear.
- Stress can be physical or emotional, short term or long term and can be caused by positive or negative life events (wedding or a funeral).

Stress = Poor self-care

- ↓ exercise
- ↑ alcohol consumption
- ↑ unhealthy eating
- ↑ forget to check blood glucose levels
- ↑ worry
- ↓ planning meals

Symptoms of Stress

- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Frustration
- Alcohol or drug use
- Mood swings
- health problems
- Irritability
- Poor appetite
- Loss of concentration
- Marital conflict
- Helplessness
- Loss of self-esteem
- Social withdrawal
- Inability to enjoy yourself

Fight or flight

- The body responds to stress by increasing hormonal levels enabling us to fight or run.
- Stored energy, glucose or fat, becomes available to cells to help body fight danger.
- In people with diabetes, insulin is not always able to let extra energy into the cells, so glucose piles up in the blood.
- Long term stress can lead to long term high blood glucose levels.

Important Role of Control

- Less perceived control = more stress
- More Perceived control = less stress
- Feeling in control of your diet is imperative to managing your diabetes and keeping your stress at a minimum.

The Link

- Stress is a contributing factor to depression.
- A new study was released 6/18/08 in *Journal of the American Medical Association* that has confirmed a link between diabetes and depression and vice versa.

The Link

- The study showed those with higher levels of depression were 50% more likely to develop diabetes than those who were not depressed.
- The study also demonstrated an increased risk between diabetics becoming depressed (at least 15% of diabetics will experience depression).

The Link

Those diagnosed with depression are at higher risk for diabetes because:

- Smoke more
- Overeat/overweight
- Exercise less
- Lower socioeconomic status
- Less education
- Increased stress hormones
- Decreased physical and mental functioning

The Link

Those diagnosed with diabetes are at greater risk for depression because:

- Stress of chronic illness
- Worry
- Anxiety
- Illness management
- Threat of complications (heart disease, peripheral nerve problems and blindness)

Symptoms of depression

- Depressed mood, sadness
- Diminished pleasure in interests/activities
- Weight/appetite change
- Sleep disturbances
- Psychomotor agitation/retardation
- Fatigue/loss of energy
- Diminished ability to think/concentrate
- Recurrent thoughts of death/suicidal ideation or attempts

Symptoms of Depression

- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Motivational
- Somatic

Symptoms of Depression - Cognitive

- Negative perception of self
 - Future filled with despair
 - Feelings of failure
 - Cause for own problems
 - Feelings of inferiority
 - Feelings of inadequacy
 - Feelings of incompetence
 - Low self-esteem
 - Hopeless
 - pessimistic

Symptoms of Depression – Emotional

- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Loss of Gratification

Symptoms of Depression - Motivational

- Passive
- Lack of Activity
- Paralysis of Will

Symptoms of Depression – Somatic

- Loss of appetite
- Loss of interest in sex
- Weight loss
- Sleep disturbances, which can lead to fatigue and weakness
- More susceptible to physical illness

Thoughts that trigger depression and stress

- Thinking in black and white, all or nothing, rigid way.
- Jumping to conclusions. Taking one piece of information to prove a negative point.
- Disqualifying the positive. Focusing on the negative aspects and failing to appreciate the positive.

More triggers

- Mind reading. Assuming you know what someone else is thinking and making it your reality.
- Negative predictions. Always thinking the worst will happen.
- Magnification of problems. Don't over react and "make a mountain out of a mole hill."

More triggers

- Minimization of solutions to problems. Limiting options which may help you resolve a problem or feel better.
- Emotional Reasoning. “I feel therefore I am.” Adopting what you are feeling as your sense of identity.

Treatment Implications

- Studies have shown that treatment for depression increases diabetic control.
- As depression lifts, glucose levels improve.
- Decreasing stress also decreases risk of depression.
- Diabetes in poor control can have similar symptoms to depression, frequently altering blood sugar levels which can make you feel tired or anxious.

Treatment Modalities for Depression

- Accurate diagnosis
- Antidepressants
- Psychotherapy
- Cognitive therapy
- Collaboration between care providers
- Decrease stress

Lifestyle Choices for Effective Stress Management

- Exercise
- Eat right, avoid sugars, fat and caffeine
- Drink lots of water
- Avoid alcohol
- Rest, get enough sleep
- Build in recreation time
- Accept what you cannot change

More Choices

- Talk to family, friend or support group
- Laugh at yourself
- Adopt a positive attitude
- Be flexible

Reframe your thinking. Stressful Situations...

- Offer opportunity to exercise **control** and **acceptance** in your life.
- Can be viewed as a **challenge**, not as a threat.
- Require a **commitment** to work and performance.
- Can positively **reinforce** your values and goals.

Relaxation minimizes stress

- Breathing techniques
- Stretching
- Meditation
- Prayer
- Yoga
- Writing/Journaling
- Relaxation Therapy
- Self-Awareness

Other relaxation techniques

- Keep an open mind
- Allow your body to relax
- Empty distracting thoughts from your mind
- Practice. Practice. Practice. You have to learn to relax.

Other relaxation techniques

- Sit in a quiet place and be still.
- Take it slow. Don't rush to relax.
- Understand the mind/body connection.
- Replace bad thoughts with good ones.
- Serenity Prayer – God, grant me the Serenity to Accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can and Wisdom to know the difference.

Choices

- Living with diabetes can be challenging and emotional.
- Diabetes, stress and depression are interconnected.
- You cannot change your diagnosis, but recognize, there are things you can change, choices that can alter your life and improve your physical, emotional, spiritual and mental well-being.