

# Adult (>18 years) Depression Flow Chart

**Two Question Screen: PHQ-2**  
Annually, new adult patients, and when suspect

**POSITIVE** response on either 2 Question Screen or  
Clinical Concern

Determine PHQ-9  
total score. If  $\geq 5$   
continue, if  $< 5$  top

**Physician Validation of Major Depressive  
D/O (MDD). R/O of medical and psychiatric  
conditions, i.e., Bipolar, substance abuse, normal  
grieving process, severe psychosocial problems  
SCORE NOT DUE TO OTHER CONDITIONS**

**MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER**

**Minimal to mild  
depressive  
symptoms**  
PHQ-9 score 5 - 9

**MDD-Moderate**  
PHQ-9 Score 10 - 14  
**MDD- Moderately Severe**  
(PHQ-9) Score 15-19

**MDD- Severe**  
(PHQ-9 Score  $\geq 20$ )

- Watchful Waiting\*\*\*
- Supportive Counseling
- Educate patient to call if condition deteriorates
- Repeat PHQ-9 at follow-up
- Consider referral if PHQ-9 scores fall in high risk areas

Recommend antidepressant  
and/or  
psychological  
counseling

Antidepressant strongly  
recommended; consider  
the addition of  
psychological counseling

Consider referral, psychiatric consultation, or hospitalization if the Patient:

- Is a risk to self or others
- Has had two failed medication trials, both trials with an adequate dose and duration of at least 6 weeks, if tolerated
- Exhibits psychotic symptoms or hx of bipolar disorder
- Has comorbid substance abuse
- Has severe psychosocial problems

**Start Antidepressant**

Yes

**Acute Phase: (See CDP chart for Acute Phase Care)**  
**GOAL: achieve remission**

- PHQ-9  $< 5$  & no significant functional impairment
- 2 follow-up contacts, at least one of which is with the prescribing provider within 4-6 weeks

Also consider adjunctive psychological counseling - see above for details.

No

- Recommend Counseling
- Educate Patient to call if condition deteriorates
- Repeat PHQ-9 at one month follow-up

**Continuation / Maintenance Phase**  
**GOAL: prevent relapse/ recurrence**  
Office visits q 8 - 12 weeks or as needed

**Antidepressant Therapy:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Episode: 7-12 months of continuous pharmacotherapy
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Episode: 1-2 years OR lifetime with complicating factors
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Episode: lifetime therapy if all 3 episodes occur within one 5 year period

Also consider adjunctive psychological counseling - see above for details.

**Follow up within one month.** If no improvement, begin antidepressant and treat as **Acute Phase** major depression or brief counseling