The holidays are fast approaching! For some, they are seen as a well-deserved break from school. For others, it is an opportunity to spend more time with friends and family members. However, for some individuals, this time of the year may mean a change in routines and schedules, learning about grades, trying to plan for the spring semester etc. It may mean a time for feeling lonely and depressed. It may be a signal of depression.

**What is depression?** Depression is a prolonged and persistent deep sadness that interferes in many aspects of one’s life. It is accompanied by feelings of worthlessness, guilt, loneliness, hopelessness and self-doubt. Suicidal thoughts may be present. Please take a few moments to answer the questions* below.

1. I feel sad mostly everyday.     Yes/No
2. I don’t enjoy the things that I use to do. Yes/No
3. I feel others or I would be better off if I were dead. Yes/No
4. I feel that I am not useful or needed. Yes/No
5. I notice that I am losing or gaining weight. Yes/No
6. I have trouble sleeping during the night or staying awake during the day. Yes/No
7. I am restless and often feel irritable. Yes/No
8. My mind isn’t as clear as it use to be. Yes/No
9. I get tired for no reason. Yes/No
10. I feel hopeless about the future. Yes/No

**Answers:** If you (or a friend or loved one) answered “Yes” to at least 5 of these questions OR if you answered “Yes” to question #3, you should seek help immediately.

Although we all experience feeling “being down” from time to time, depression is an intense experience that lasts for an extended period of time. Depression can be helped by seeing a professional.
If you would like more information about this issue, you may contact your student assistance counselor. Please remember that the services are free and confidential.

* The above self-test is adapted from the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (Zung, W.K., 1974)