DRIVING WITH DEPRESSION

Depression is a common psychiatric disorder, which can impact on many areas of one’s life, with driving being no exception. Depression may be acute or chronic and its symptoms and medication side-effects can vary greatly from one individual to another. However in all cases, it is important to maintain safe driving abilities, if one wishes to continue to drive.

Medications
It is crucial that a physician feels your medications are stable and that you are on maintenance doses. Any dosage readjustments should initially be carefully monitored by a physician to observe any evidence of side-effects such as drowsiness, which can interfere with the ability to safely drive.

Common factors that can affect safe driving:
- Need to be able to regulate emotions and avoid driving when upset, angry or overly emotional
- Coping abilities need to be adequate to deal with busy traffic or expressway driving
- Insomnia can lead to fatigue and loss of energy, interfering with one’s attention span and concentration abilities
- Diminished ability to think quickly or indecisiveness can cause poor decisions while driving
- High levels of anxiety or panic attacks may make it difficult to drive safely

A driver rehabilitation specialist can provide a comprehensive evaluation and make recommendations regarding driving.

The assessment should include:
- Review of medical history and medications
- Functional ability
- Vision
- Perception
- Reaction time
- Behind-the-wheel evaluation

If you or someone you drive with is having difficulty driving due to depression, a driver evaluation may be indicated. A driver rehabilitation specialist can provide a comprehensive evaluation to determine your ability to drive.