



## PHQ-9: Depression Treatment Recommendations

The Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) is a screening tool that provides an index of depression severity. Listed below is information on how to interpret PHQ-9 scores, as well as corresponding stepped-care treatments based on the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines. The PHQ-9 is not a diagnostic tool, and the information below should be considered a guideline to aid clinician's in making treatment recommendations. When making treatment recommendations it is important to take into consideration the patient's current level of functioning, previous episodes of depression, and preference for treatment.

PHQ Score	Level of Depression	NICE Guidelines for Intervention
0-4	None-Minimal	<b>None:</b> Minimal symptoms present.
5-9	Mild	<b>Watchful waiting:</b> If symptoms persist in 2 weeks, refer to next level of care. <b>Note:</b> If the patient's subthreshold symptoms have been persistent or if the patient has had a previous history of severe depression, consider referring them directly to the next level of care.
10-14	Moderate	<b>Guided Self-Help:</b> Patients are provided with readings based on the principles of CBT. Additionally the patient has 3-4 sessions (in person or by phone) to check in with a Clinical Consultant. The consultant supports the patient with the self-help materials, and monitors them for improvement. <b>Medication:</b> Consider medication if the patient's symptoms have persisted for more than 2 years or if they have a previous history of severe depression.
15+	Severe	<b>Psychotherapy:</b> Patients meet with a therapist to undergo empirically validated treatments for depression (CBT, IPT). Alternatively, consider <b>Medication.</b> If the patient has an inadequate response to either psychotherapy or medication alone, consider combining treatments.