

THE STEALTH BOMBER

The Stealth Bomber can enter enemy territory and carry out its mission without detection by enemy radar. Stealth is “a secret means to accomplish something.” Stealth children, youth, women and men have been around much longer than the bomber.

As far back as depression and related health conditions can be traced, people have used many means to keep our condition secret. Still today we know that our freedom to function in our society requires that we prevent others from seeing our suffering.

We try to be stealthful about our depression. Two “stealthy” symptoms are withdrawal and isolation.

Stage one stealth is the withdrawal and isolation that come naturally with depression. Without conscious intent we become detached from other people. In this stage we continue to stay active and live secretly with our pain and disability. We are successful in concealing it from most people.

Stealth stage two comes with a more advanced depression. It causes us to withdraw emotionally from people and from things happening around us.

We are there physically but our thoughts and feelings are somewhere else. Our families tell us that we withdraw into our own world. They are entirely correct! Our friends think we want nothing to do with them. They are incorrect! We want to stay close to people, but it is impossible for us to do so. Feelings of fear, awkwardness and embarrassment prevent it.

In “our own world” our feelings are opposite to all things good and positive in your normal world. For us, everything is negative, frightening, and hopeless.

We still try to pretend normalcy, but our difference becomes more visible—and we know it. Consequently, we withdraw more and we try harder to be like you.

In stealth stage three the change is somewhat subtle. If you want to see the change you must be attentive to what we are doing.

As we go deeper into depression, we also go deeper into our inner world, which becomes increasingly dreadful. The most horrifying change occurs at this time—the real world now looks and feels like the world inside us.

Everybody and everything out there is confusing, frightening, painful, and life threatening. The world and all people are now enemy territory. We are surrounded by the enemy and realize that we are not stealthful at all. Our only way to survive is to hide. Like a frightened rabbit in a bush, we hunker down in our home, our bed, or in our clothes closet. Staying out of sight and out of reach is our only way to achieve safety. However unrealistic that may be, it is our reality.

We perceive that you are the enemy as we hide for dear life in enemy territory. It is you from whom we hide. Please prove our perception to be wrong, and find us.

Did you ever play a game of “hide and seek” in which no one came to seek after you had hidden? We have, and it is no game.

As a caring individual you might ask how to be a friend to us, or how to help us. Here’s how: stop being stealthful yourself. Start by being a seeker and find us and be yourself with us.

