Coping with Depression

What Causes Depression?

Different Perspectives

1. **Feelings of loss.** Death of a loved one, ending a relationship or friendship, loss of a hope, wish or personal dream.

2. **A failure to live authentically.** A failure to live according to one’s own preference, but instead tries to comply with and or tries to please everyone around them.

3. **There are inadequate or insufficient reinforcers in one’s life.** An individual feels competent and receives praise in only a small area of their life, while the rest of their life is relatively empty.

4. **Learned helplessness.** An individual may feel helpless to get what he wants out of life.

5. **The way we see ourselves.** Low self-esteem, seeing ourselves as losers.

6. **A way of distracting** from underlying feelings that may be more difficult to experience than depression (for example, appropriate anger).

7. **How we think and the way we think** — cognitive distortions.
   - **All or nothing/ black and white thinking.** Anything short of perfection means you’re a total failure.
   - **Over-generalization.** You see a single negative event as a never ending pattern of defeat.
   - **Mental filter.** You seek out one single negative detail and endlessly dwell upon it.
   - **Jumping to conclusions.** You make negative interpretations of an event though there are no definite facts to support your conclusion.
   - **The fortune teller response.** You anticipate things will turn out badly and believe that your prediction is an established fact.

8. **There may be a genetic component or biological reason** for depression in some individuals.
Some people hold core beliefs about themselves and the world that contribute to depression.

1. **The approval addict.** The belief that approval and disapproval from others is the ultimate means to measure our self worth.
2. **The love addict.** I cannot truly be happy and fulfilled unless I am loved by another person.
3. **Achievement.** My worth as a person is proportional to what I have achieved in my life.
4. **Anything less than perfect** is not worthwhile, it's just average and no one wants to be average.

**Manifestations of Depression**

- Depressed mood
- Loss of pleasure or interest in usual activities
- Appetite disturbance resulting in weight gain or loss
- Sleep disturbance
- Loss of energy, fatigue
- Feeling of worthlessness and/or guilt
- Difficulties in thinking
- Social withdrawal
- Possible increase in alcohol or drugs
- Diminished sex drive
- Possible thought of suicide

**Coping with Depression**

1. Don’t panic - most depressions are time limited and will pass.
2. Decrease the frequency of unpleasant events in your life and increase the frequency of pleasant activities.
3. Social skills training to help make social interactions more satisfying.
4. Assertiveness training - teaches people how to deal with situations in which they tend to let themselves be taken advantage of.
5. Relaxation training, mediation or yoga.
7. Stay in contact with friends and family.
8. Activities - find activities that are of interest to you for no other reason than intrinsic.
9. Stop depriving yourself. Life is not a series of deprivations. If food is important to you and you’re dieting, find substitute ways to gratify yourself.
10. Talk to a psychologist, counselor, friend or clergy member.

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