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Beating The Blues

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- Background in Behavioral Health and Dementia
- Matter of Balance Program Coordinator





Overview

- Mental Health
- Depression Facts
- Depression Risk Factors
- Treatment
- Strategies to Beat the Blues
- Self-care





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Although 1 in 5 U.S. adults will experience a mental health condition in their lifetime, these disorders are still stigmatized. Negative public perceptions of mood disorders can cause those affected to suffer from feelings of alienation and loneliness.





Mental Health

- Includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being
- It affects how we think, feel, and act
- It helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, make healthy choices
- Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including:
 - Biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry
 - Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
 - Family history of mental health problems



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Depression is a serious but treatable disorder that affects millions of people, from young to old, and from all walks of life. It gets in the way of everyday life, causing tremendous pain, hurting not just those suffering from it but also impacting everyone around them.





Depression Statistics

- In 2023, 29.0% of Americans report having been diagnosed with depression in their lifetime.
- 17.8% report currently having depression.
- The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) estimates that 21 million U.S. adults had at least one major depressive episode in 2021. This represents 8.3% of the U.S. adult population.





What is Depression?

- Depression (also known as major depression, major depressive disorder, or clinical depression) is a common but serious mood disorder.
 - It causes severe symptoms that affect how a person feels, thinks, and handles daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working.
- To be diagnosed with depression, the symptoms must be present for at least 2 weeks.
- There are different types of depression, some of which develop due to specific circumstances.
- Major depression includes symptoms of depressed mood or loss of interest, most of the time for at least 2 weeks, that interfere with daily activities.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms

- Persistent sad, anxious, or “empty” mood
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of irritability, frustration, or restlessness
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities



Signs





Signs and Symptoms

- Decreased energy, fatigue, or feeling slowed down
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, waking early in the morning, or oversleeping
- Changes in appetite or unplanned weight changes
- Physical aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not have a clear physical cause and do not go away with treatment
- Thoughts of death or suicide or suicide attempts



Who gets Depression?



Depression can affect people of all ages, races, ethnicities, and genders.



Women are diagnosed with depression more often than men, but men can also be depressed. Because men may be less likely to recognize, talk about, and seek help for their feelings or emotional problems



Studies also show higher rates of depression and an increased risk for the disorder among members of the LGBTQI+ community.



Risk Factors for Depression

- Depression can happen to anyone.
- People who have lived through abuse, severe losses or other stressful events are more likely to develop depression. Women are more likely to have depression than men.





Causes for Depression

- Chronic Stress
- Personality Traits
- Brain Chemistry
- Family History/Genetics
- Aging





Causes of Depression

- Poor Nutrition
- Pregnancy and Giving Birth
- Menopause
- Loneliness
- Alcohol and Drug Use
- Illness





Chemistry of the Brain

- During the last decade, increased access to brain imaging technology has allowed neuroscientists and hospital clinicians to view the brain in detail, measure neural activity, and quantify neurotransmitter levels.
- Such studies have revealed many clues regarding the underlying contributing factors of depression and the pathophysiology of this disease.





Chemistry of the Brain

- Reduced Dopamine and Serotonin Levels
- Dopamine is the chemical for motivation
- Serotonin is the happy hormone
- People often call dopamine and serotonin the “happy hormones,” because they promote mental well-being. Dopamine, also known as the “feel-good” hormone, is associated with the brain's reward system and produces pleasant sensations.
- Serotonin can help increase happiness by alleviating depression and anxiety.



Types of Depression

Common Types of Depressive Disorders



Major Depressive Disorder



Persistent Depressive Disorder



Bipolar Depression



Postpartum Depression



Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder



Seasonal Affective Disorder



Atypical Depression



Treatment for Depression



Treatment for depression typically isn't a quick fix.



It can take time and effort to work with healthcare professionals to find a medication or other medical therapy that helps ease symptoms.



Psychotherapy

- Psychotherapy (also called “talk therapy” or “counseling”) teaches individuals with depression new ways of thinking and behaving and helps with changing habits that contribute to depression.
- Most psychotherapy occurs with a licensed, trained mental health professional in one-on-one sessions or with other individuals in a group setting.
- Two effective psychotherapies to treat depression include cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and interpersonal therapy (IPT). The use of older forms of psychotherapy, such as dynamic therapy, for a limited time also may help some people with depression.



Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

- With CBT, people learn to challenge and change unhelpful thinking patterns and behavior to improve their depressive and anxious feelings.
- Recent advances in CBT include introducing mindfulness principles and the development of specialized forms of therapy targeting particular symptoms, such as insomnia.



Medications

- Antidepressants are medications commonly used to treat depression.
- They take time to work—usually 4 to 8 weeks—and symptoms such as problems with sleep, appetite, or concentration often improve before mood lifts.
- It is important to give medication a chance before deciding whether or not it works.



Beat the Blues

Get in a routine.

- Depression can strip away the structure from your life. One day melts into the next.
- Setting a gentle daily schedule can help you get back on track.





Beat the Blues

Set goals.

- When you're depressed, you may feel like you can't accomplish anything. That makes you feel worse about yourself. To push back, set daily goals for yourself.
- "Start very small," Cook says. "Make your goal something that you can succeed at, like doing the dishes every other day."
- As you start to feel better, you can add more challenging daily goals.





Beat the Blues

Eat healthy.

There is no magic diet that fixes depression. It's a good idea to watch what you eat, though. If depression tends to make you overeat, getting in control of your eating will help you feel better.





Beat the Blues

Exercise.

- It temporarily boosts feel-good chemicals called endorphins. It may also have long-term benefits for people with depression.
- Regular exercise seems to encourage the brain to rewire itself in positive ways, Cook says.
- How much exercise do you need? Just walking a few times a week can help.





Beat the Blues

Get enough sleep.

- Depression can make it hard to get enough shut-eye, and too little sleep can make depression worse.
- Start by making some changes to your lifestyle. Go to bed and get up at the same time every day. Try not to nap.
- Take all the distractions out of your bedroom -- no computer and no TV. In time, you may find your sleep improves.





Beat the Blues

Challenge negative thoughts.

- In your fight against depression, a lot of the work is mental -- changing how you think. When you're depressed, you leap to the worst possible conclusions.
- The next time you're feeling negative, use logic as a natural depression treatment. You might feel like no one likes you, but is there real evidence for that? You might feel like the most worthless person, but is that likely?
- It takes practice, but you can beat back those negative thoughts before they get out of control.





Beat the Blues

Spirituality having a positive impact!

- Sense of purpose: Spirituality can help people find a sense of purpose and belonging.
- Emotional resilience: Spirituality can help people build resilience to cope with stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Sense of self: Spirituality can help people feel more connected to themselves and their values.
- Social behavior: Spirituality can provide a framework for social behavior.
- Stress management: Spiritual practices like meditation and prayer can help manage stress and anxiety





Beat the Blues

SPIRITUALITY & MENTAL HEALTH



SPIRITUAL HEALTH

- intrinsic self-worth
- inner peace
- living from deepest values
- a sense of flourishing

Spiritual Health Association,
2021

SHARED QUALITIES

- sense of purpose
- mindfulness, presence
- connection to self, others
- gratitude and appreciation
- empathy



MENTAL HEALTH

- emotional resilience
- healthy relationships
- work/life balance
- clarity and focus

World Health Organisation,
2023





Beat the Blues

Take on responsibilities.

- When you're depressed, you may want to pull back from life and give up your responsibilities at home and at work. Don't.
- Staying involved and having daily responsibilities can help you maintain a lifestyle that can help counter depression. They ground you and give you a sense of accomplishment.





Beat the Blues

Help others.

- Write a letter to a friend or family member – stay connected
- Gratitude Journal – start each day with something you are thankful for.





Self-Care Plan

When creating your self-care plan, it's important to consider the following questions:

- **What will I do for self-care?** Stick to the basics and add certain self-care activities to your calendar. Some examples are getting enough sleep, exercising as appropriate for your own health, eating healthy, spending time with loved ones, using relaxation exercises and practicing meditation.
- **Who can I call?** Identify people in your life who you trust and can talk to about the good and bad that may happen.
- **Who can I reach out to if I need more help?** Identify who you can call if you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or sad. This may include loved ones, a coach or teacher, or mental health professional.



Self-Care Domains





Nutrition & Mood

Do:

- Eat a diet high in lean protein, fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Foods known to help stabilize mood- eggs, turkey, chicken, fish, omega 3 rich foods (fish, nuts), seeds (pumpkin, sesame), yogurt/cottage cheese.
- Monitor for food Intolerances. Example: gluten





Nutrition & Mood

Limit:

- Foods high in sugar and refined carbohydrates (white bread, cookies, pastries).
- Alcohol – long-term or heavy use worsens mood disorder symptoms.
- Caffeine - can make it more difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep. Lack of sleep can worsen depression and anxiety symptoms.





Resources

- Mayo Clinic
- Journal of Psychiatry
- Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports
- National Institute of Health
- American Psychiatric Association





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Questions?

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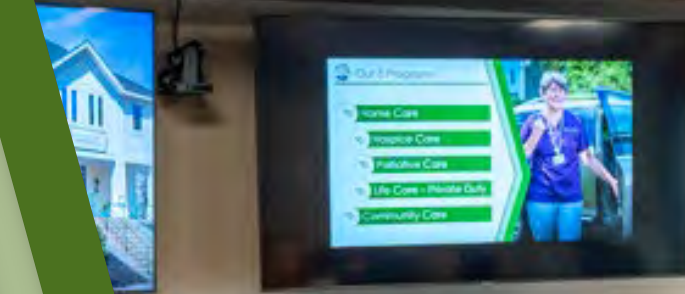
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