



WSN Counselling and Coaching

Fact File

Dealing with depression

The causes of depression are varied and are no respecter of social class, wealth, sex or age - it can affect almost anybody and sometimes strikes without warning. If the WSN method is not the way forward for you, then your counsellor will know exactly what sort of work IS needed to get you right!

Causes of Depression

Although depression does not always respond well to self-help, most depressions can indeed be greatly improved via one of the many therapies that are available to deal with the situation. Why 'most' depressions? Well, mainly because depression is considered to be a serious illness that needs handling with great care, sometimes needing medication as well as therapy, sometimes responding well to medication without other help. Clinical depression, which includes Bi-polar disorder (originally Manic Depression) and endogenous depression, is thought to be caused by brain chemistry. Both of these disorders need medication, as does the depression sometimes brought about by brain damage or brain surgery.

With endogenous depression the individual is a constantly low mood, continually depressed; there is seldom, if ever, any change of emotional state and nothing seems to create a 'lift'. Bipolar disorder, on the other hand, is characterised by swings from lethargic depression to a euphoric state (mania). In the depressive stage, the individual is lethargically depressed and there is little or no urge to do even the basic essentials of caring for self; in the manic phase, the exact opposite applies and there is an excess of energy (sometimes accompanied by prodigious and selfishly-orientated sex-drive) and a euphoric feeling of being able to achieve almost anything. Not unusually, the sufferer, in this phase, will make elaborate and/or outrageous plans for success.

The type of depression that almost always responds well to therapy, and often to self-help, is all forms of reactive depression. These are usually brought about by the tribulations of life, rather than by any clinical imbalance in the brain.

Here are some of the causes of depression of this type:

- **Redundancy**
- **Grief**
- **Relationship issues**
- **Money worries**
- **Career anxieties**
- **Stress**
- **Moving house**
- **Post-natal (some)**
- **PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)**

You get the idea - anything that has been 'triggered', even it has existed for some considerable time, can be helped by various forms of therapy. In general, face-to-face work is better here, though some improvement can often be made via telephone or even online work.

Symptoms of depression

Depression symptoms can be enormously varied. Here are just a few - not an exhaustive list by any means:

- **Sleeping difficulties (waking early or laying awake)**
- **Tired all the time**
- **Tearfulness for little or no reasons**
- **Eating when not hungry**
- **Not able to eat**
- **Loss of appetite**
- **Obsessive thinking patterns**
- **Loss of interest in personal care/hygiene**
- **Poor memory/concentration**
- **Loss of interest in sexual activity**

Where therapy is indicated, it is impossible to forecast the number of sessions from this site, and indeed it would be irresponsible to do so, since if therapy did not produce a desired result within the suggested time, the depression might actually become deeper. When meeting with a therapist, though, it is often possible to get some idea of duration and number of sessions. It is fair to say that it is usually shorter than most people think.

For some people, the problem is at least partly dietary and many therapists are conversant with this aspect of the illness.

WSN and Depression

WSN can help to lift your depression by discovering what the root cause of it is - your counsellor will help you explore parts of the mind that are usually inaccessible to conscious thought. There's nothing scary about this process of course - it all happens in a conversational manner and you will be likely surprised at how much you discover about yourself! If nothing else, part of that discovery process would at least render the depression easier to deal with on a daily basis - and for some people that would seem like a miracle cure!

Two effective and easy self-help methods

Physical exercise

Although this can be difficult to start for the individual who is suffering depression, it is only difficult! It is certainly not impossible, even though you might think: "I just can't..." Once you have started, it gets easier with every session.

The reason that physical exercise can be an effective aid with the condition is that it encourages the release of Endorphins - the human body's natural 'feel good' chemical, that can work like an anti-depressant medication - into the bloodstream. The effects are often immediate and last longer as time passes, perhaps due to a 'reconditioning' effect upon the psyche.

If you are not used to physical exercise, be sure to consult your doctor before you start and also be sure to start slowly; brisk walking for 15 minutes is a good way to start and you can increase this as quickly as you feel comfortable to do so. You need to work hard enough to raise your body temperature and increase your heart/breathing rate but not to the point

where speech becomes difficult. *If you feel excessively tired or uncomfortable, STOP IMMEDIATELY.*

S-M-I-L-E!

To many, the notion that smiling to yourself can help to make positive and lasting changes to depression seems ridiculous - yet it is well established that even a false smile, as long as it reaches the edges of the eyes, changes the body's chemistry. Although the mechanism is not clearly understood, it appears to again encourage the release of endorphins into the blood stream. So if you smile broadly at yourself every time you walk past a mirror or other reflective surface, there is a high chance that you will soon start to feel better.

It is well known that laughter eases depression - for a while there were 'laughter clinics' in London where people suffering from depression were encouraged by various means to laugh long and loudly.

If you're still not convinced, try this: Throw your arms into the air, force an expression of excitement/joy or happiness on to your face (ACT it!) and while keeping that position try to say: *"I feel really depressed today"* but saying it as if you mean it and actually sounding depressed. This proves to be impossible for most and usually, those who think they have managed it have not realised that they have lost the 'happy shape' that they took at the beginning...

This is, or should be, sound evidence that the body affects the mind; stand up, smile, walk briskly - and it is almost inevitable that you will feel better.

Many people are actually unwilling to attempt these self-help methods; investigation often reveals that they actually do not want the depression to lift. If this is you, search inside your mind to find out why (sometimes it's because attention is being sought, for instance) then address the problem directly. **Without doubt, that can be one of the best forms of self help**

If you are suffering from any form of depression, the earlier you seek help the more effective any therapy is likely to be and the sooner it will start to work.