

Mental/Emotional Health Depression

Frank King, DC

Depression has become so prevalent in modern society that it has been called the "common cold of mental health." Approximately 30 million Americans are unable to experience many of the pleasures of life because they feel so depressed. Depression is like a thief who robs its victims of their purpose in life, their family relationships, business potentials, general health, and even the precious gift of life itself.

Homeopathy can offer an effective solution to the many types and varieties of depression. The correct homeopathic formula can, in many cases, quickly eliminate this dread condition from an individual's life. However, one homeopathic formula alone may not completely correct all the causes connected to a depressed condition.

Other homeopathic formulas may be necessary to aid in the correction of other root problems which are related commonly to this complex condition. A thorough look at the "whole" person is essential to treating. We offer a homeopathic health appraisal questionnaire which provides a quick and effective look into the patient's total condition. The patient scores each health issue on a 1-5 scale of intensity. This provides key information for the doctor to prioritize the choice order of homeopathic formulations.

The following homeopathic formulas can be essential pieces of the puzzle for eliminating depression from a patient's life. Due to the many different homeopathic ingredients used for depression, there is not just one homeopathic formula used for the majority of depression cases. Besides general homeopathic depression or mood enhancement formulas, a number of other related homeopathic formulas may be integral to the patient's total permanent health. Upon reviewing the homeopathic health appraisal questionnaire, many possible underlying causes for depression may come to light.

Your patients will have a far better chance of overcoming debilitating mental/emotional conditions equipped with specific homeopathic formulas for these conditions:

- grief and guilt
- anxiety
- claustrophobia
- insomnia
- nervousness

- hypoglycemia
- learning disabilities
- hyperactivity
- allergy or reactions to foods
- PMS
- menopause or hormonal imbalances
- detox and drainage
- stress and anxiety
- chronic viral conditions

Homeopathy added to your chiropractic management program will effectively broaden your scope of practice, however when dealing with depression and many other conditions, your patient's lifestyle management is essential to your successful management of their health. The following are some hints that will be helpful to you and your patients.

Patient Lifestyle Management Procedures

All of us feel sad at one time or another. That's a normal response to the stresses of life. But if you find yourself feeling down for an extended period of time, it's a good idea to get some help. By knowing the various symptoms and thought patterns that characteristically afflict a depressed person, you can address your situation and work at overcoming it.

Don't let anyone tell you that depression is "all in your head." It can affect every part of your body. Researchers believe that depression can weaken immune system function. This can cause you to be more susceptible to illness and infection, and, over time can even accelerate chronic disease. Untreated, prolonged depression can cause premature aging. It slows body function as well as causing a loss of muscle tone.

The symptoms of depression can vary according to the type of depression. With reactive depression, symptoms include self-pity, and loss of self-esteem. Reactive depression results from being unable to recover from such stressful events of life as the death of a loved one, relationship problems, job loss, or chronic illness.

Symptoms of irritability, increase in appetite, weight gain, increased need for sleep, and headaches

are common to those suffering with seasonal affective disorder (SAD). SAD is referred to as a winter depression, occurring anywhere from November through March. SAD is caused by a lack of exposure to sunlight. SAD is prevalent in those living in Alaska which remains dark most of the day during the winter months.

It appears that SAD sufferers have a family history of the condition, or other emotional problems. Though there is theory as well as speculation about the causes of SAD, researchers believe that the hormone melatonin, which is released by the pineal gland during the winter months, may be the culprit.

Another type of depression is physically based. This is often seen where there is chronic illness or drug use, which alters the person's natural state.

Manic depression, also called bi-polar disorder, causes the person's moods to fluctuate from feelings of euphoria and intense energy to feelings of despair and listlessness.

Other symptoms of depression may include difficulty in concentrating and making decisions, feelings of hopelessness or unworthiness, and guilt. A most severe symptom of depression is thoughts of death or suicide. Please note: If you are experiencing thoughts of suicide, call your pastor, a counselor or your local suicide hotline. If you are reading this and suspect a loved one is suicidal, ask them. Bringing up the subject does not put the idea in their head. It is a way of getting these deceptive thoughts out of the darkness and into the light to be discussed and begin healing.

As you address the symptoms you have, and work with your doctor in the treatment of your depression, here are some lifestyle management steps intended to assist you in overcoming depression.

- Maintain balance! It's so important to live and maintain a balanced lifestyle. Be consistent by eating regular healthy meals, regularly exercising, and getting plenty of sleep. Healthy meals are very low in sugar and fat; eat nonprocessed whole foods, and plenty of good clean water.
- Admit it! You are not a weak person by admitting you're depressed. Admission is a sign of strength. We have to confess it before we can effectively deal with it.
- Renew your mind! It is so important to keep your thoughts pure. Think about all the blessings and good things going on, and/or remind yourself of past successes. When you make this way of thinking a way of life, it becomes an automatic response. When your automatic response is to focus on the blessings, you're better able to recognize faulty thinking when it creeps in.
- Know your direction! Don't wander aimlessly through life without purpose. Write down your goals along with the hidden desires of our heart, then go about with the business of accomplishing them!
- Lighten up! (This suggestion is especially good if you suffer from SAD.) Soak up as much natural light as possible, especially in the morning hours. If your home has a tendency to be dark, keep the blinds and curtains open as much as possible. It may be a good idea to invest in a full spectrum light box designed specifically to "lighten up" your environment.

- Incorporate into your life a good vitamin program. Try taking a B complex vitamin which is a supplement designed to provide optimal brain function.

- It isn't hopeless! Though one of the symptoms of depression is feeling hopeless, it's a lie! There is always hope. Even though at times you may express the attitude, "Oh, what's the use, none of these steps will really help?" go ahead and try them. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain!

Frank King, DC
Asheville, North Carolina

DECEMBER 1996