

## Defeating Depression: Impossible becomes possible

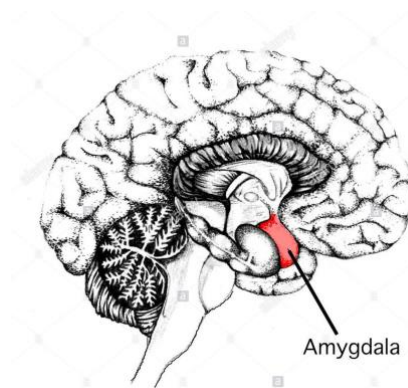
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Depression is a common mental disorder affecting more than 264 million people worldwide. It is characterized by persistent sadness and a lack of interest or pleasure in previously rewarding or enjoyable activities. Decreased sun exposure has been associated with a drop in your serotonin levels, which can lead to major depression with seasonal patterns. That's why in Northern countries the percentages of people who are affected from depression are higher

[https://www.who.int/health-topics/depression#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/depression#tab=tab_1)

Depression changes the brain in a multitude of ways. Brain imaging studies show that depression is connected to changes in several parts of the brain. But there are three key parts of the brain which depression really changes.

The first part of the brain that depression changes is amygdala. Amygdala regulates emotions in the brain such as pleasure, sadness and fear. Amygdala is actually our reptilian brain for when we have to think about fighting or fleeing. When humans become depressed the amygdala doesn't know how to react, so instead it flickers all of its emotions at random. This can cause problems like sleep deprivation, sudden mood swings and an unbalance of key hormones.



The second part of the brain that depression affects is hippocampus. This part of the brain regulates long term memories and the stress hormone cortisol. But depression also affects the size of the hippocampus, with an average of 13% smaller hippocampus in a depressed brain. Having a surplus of cortisol

stress hormones can actually block the growth of new neurons, which can create poor moods and loss of memory.

The third main area is the thalamus. The thalamus' job is to link different things to good and bad emotions, such as dogs are connected to a good mood and snakes are connected to a bad mood.

Problems with these parts of the brain can cause huge damage to the hormones such as serotonin which regulates sleep and mood, and also norepinephrine which affects motivation.

Teenagers who experience depression usually isolate themselves from other people. They avoid any contact and prefer to be alone most of the time. There are also changes in eating and sleeping habits such as sleeping too much or insomnia and decreased appetite. Depressed teenagers also feel worthless and hopeless which might lead to attempt suicide. There are also significant changes in behaviour. Abuse of alcohol and drugs are signs that something is wrong. They put less attention to appearance and hygiene.



There are a range of ways to deal with depression, and often they are best used in conjunction with each other. The primary medical options are Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), antidepressant medication, and in some severe cases, Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT).

Education for people with depression is extremely valuable. Greater control in turn may lead to reduced feelings of helplessness and an increased sense of well-being.

There are some cognitive Strategies and behavioural Strategies to deal with depression:

The aim of a cognitive approach is to help people identify and correct their distorted and negatively biased thoughts. With encouragement to reframe the way they think about life, people are able to recover from failures more effectively and to recognise and take credit for the good things in their lives.

Behavioural strategies for depression aim to identify and change aspects of behaviour that may worsen depression. Set goals for daily activity. Plan full days of useful activity by making a list of the activities you are going to engage in at different times during the day. Try to stick to this plan as closely as possible. Avoid comparing the way you are behaving or feeling now while you are depressed with the way you

used to behave or feel before becoming depressed. Reward yourself for your efforts.

Try to follow these five steps, maybe it will help you dealing with your depression or maybe it will help you getting out of it:

1. Take A Different View:

You are so stuck on only seeing things one way, that you miss any other possible view. Try to see the things in other ways and maybe in a more positive way.

2. Visualize A Happy Memory:

Instead of remembering all the bad memories, try to remember how it was before your depression. Think about all your good memories, because then you have a reason to smile, and then you will forget the bad memories for a moment.

3. Say some good qualities about yourself:

When you have depression, you often feel like having negative thoughts and talking down about yourself. Instead, try to focus on some positive thoughts and say at least 3 good things about yourself every day. It can help your mood and your self-confidence.

4. Make Plans:

When you have a depression, you mostly want to lay in your bed and just be alone. Instead of just laying alone, then make some plans for the day, because it can give you some motivation

and help you do something. If you just lay in your bed the whole day, it's not helping you to get out of the depression.

5. Find Something to Look Forward To:

If you have something to look forward to, then it can make you happier and maybe it will make you forget the depression, because you are thinking about what you are looking forward to.



Isolation affects social and mental behaviour. Everyone has lived this experience during lockdown, when we had to stay at home. The quarantine lasted for a few months. At the beginning it was easy to deal with it because everyone could take a break from their normal (and sometimes chaotic) lives.

Then, things started to get more difficult because no one was used to not going out everyday, nobody could see their friends and everyone wanted to see the sunlight. But there was also a positive side of it: a lot of people started to develop capacities with technological

devices, so they took advantage of it and were able to connect with their friends in video calls or online games.

It also helped establish a routine, because as nobody was able to get out of home, a lot of people started to do exercise, which helps avoid depression. Furthermore, the online classes helped to be more productive and not lose so much time.



Maybe not everyone knows how to recognize a depressed person, but there are some signs that actually show that the individual is suffering, such as a change in his/her normal behaviour, the tendency to isolate or they can also be more nervous or anxious.

The moment we notice these things (which at the beginning can seem small), is when we have to act and not just witness this phenomenon, as if it was something not important.

We have to be in this together with them and try to make them feel always loved, that they are

enough and not a burden. Remember: depression is an illness, not a sign of weakness or a character defect.

Recovery is the rule, not the exception.

Treatment is effective, and there are many treatment options available. There is a suitable treatment for most people.

The goal of treatment is to get completely well and stay well.

The rate of recurrence is quite high: half the people who had one episode of depression will have a recurrence, and the rate increases with the number of previous episodes.

The person and his or her family can be taught to recognise and act upon early warning signs of depression. By seeking early treatment, the severity of the episode may be greatly reduced.



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