

There Is Always Hope

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Take this quick test and see if you may be depressed.

- 1) ___ You have trouble thinking straight and making decisions
- 2) ___ You feel defeated and powerless
- 3) ___ You can't imagine anything good happening today or tomorrow
- 4) ___ You cry a lot, especially in the morning
- 5) ___ You feel like you can't do anything right
- 6) ___ You feel lonely and don't go out much
- 7) ___ You don't feel like doing anything, not even what you normally enjoy
- 8) ___ You feel tired. You sleep too much or can't sleep
- 9) ___ You lost your appetite or you eat too much for comfort
- 10) ___ You think that everything is your fault

If you have checked some or most of the above statements you may be depressed.

To think and believe that you are defeated doesn't mean that you in fact are defeated.

People suffering from depression see their possibilities in extremely negative light. "The Depression" is not you. Depression is a mood disturbance that makes you *feel* powerless and hopeless. *You* are not powerless and there is always hope!

What to do

If you are having more bad days than good, consider a systematic approach. You may decide to conduct an investigation. The object of the investigation should be to recognize how you consistently distort your experiences, and how your self-criticalness and pessimism make you lose motivation and hope. Ask a friend or family member to help you put your negative self-evaluations under a microscope (*1). These negative thoughts and beliefs about yourself and what you can achieve are not a true picture of who you are and what your possibilities are.

How you think determines how you feel.

When you are depressed you systematically distort your experiences in a negative direction, and what you believe and think about yourself determines how you feel (*2). Therefore it makes sense to take a good look at how your thoughts distort the way you evaluate yourself. By investigating your thoughts and beliefs you have begun the process of undermining the foundation of the depressed mood. It is not about convincing yourself that everything is okay. You are already convinced that the situation is hopeless - that you are powerless and can't escape. This approach is about objectively observing these negative notions. Some negative thoughts might in fact be partly true. But when you are depressed you will have many more false than true notions. Instead of making your decisions on the basis of

negative thoughts and misconceptions, you may want to gather the facts and throw some light on “The Depression”.

(*1) **Treatment options:**

Psychiatrists are medical doctors (MD) specialized in mental disorders. Psychiatrists use anti-depressive medication to treat depression.

Psychologists, Counselors and Therapists are specialists in psychology i.e. normal and abnormal development. Most have a master’s degree (MS) or doctoral degree (PhD) in psychology. Most use talk therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy or interpersonal therapy to treat depression.

(*2) In part inspired by Gary Emery’s book: “Overcoming Depression – A Cognitive-Behavioral Protocol for the Treatment of Depression.”

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