

Ask Your Therapist

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Depression

Depression is considered a disorder of the mood as opposed to a disorder of one's thinking. There is Major Depressive Disorder, Single Episode or Recurrent Episodes, and Dysthymic Disorder.

The main difference between the Major Depressive Disorder Single Episode and Recurrent Episodes is that there is at least a 2 month period between episodes (so that the depression is recurring) rather than just an extended single episode.

Major Depression has certain characteristics: depressed mood, markedly decreased interest or pleasure in life, significant weight loss or gain, insomnia or hypersomnia (sleeps too much), unusual fatigue or restlessness, feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt, diminished ability to think or concentrate, recurring thoughts of death or suicide, increased irritability; none of which are connected to normal bereavement.

Dysthymic Disorder is a condition of depressed mood that exists for more days than less, for a period of 2 years or longer. Some people think of it as Walking or Ambulatory Depression. Characteristics of Dysthymic Disorder include: poor appetite or overeating, insomnia or hypersomnia, low energy or fatigue, low self-esteem, poor concentration or difficulty making decisions, and feelings of hopelessness.

There is a high correlation between substance abuse/addictions and an underlying depression. There is also a high correlation between childhood trauma and later depression.

Current research results indicate that a combination of psychotherapy and medication is the most effective treatment for depression. Medication can help lift the depression, creating energy and space for the person to figure out how the depression began and take steps to repair the circumstances that created the depression in the first place.

If you or anyone in your life is struggling with depression, please urge them to seek professional help. There is no need to suffer from this very treatable condition.

To read all the prior Ask Your Therapist columns go to www.krishnabai.com where you can also send Krishnabai a general question for her column.

Krishnabai, MSW is a therapist in Ashby and Wellesley Hills where she sees adults, older teens and couples. The core of her work is the discovery and expression of the Authentic Self. She focuses on the identification, expression, and resolution of emotions, commitment to honesty and the use of remedial education and information. The Ashby Center for Counseling 978-827-1181.