

Are You a Woman Struggling with Depression?

Are you a woman struggling with depression? This is a frightening question that many women might choose not to explore. Women are supposed to be strong, multi-taskers, able to handle everything that comes our way. Today's woman is expected to be mom, nurse, chef, maintenance "man", taxi driver, career woman, concierge, financial advisor, home accountant, maid, and with all of our "extra" time and energy, lover to our husbands! These expectations can be overwhelming.

It is not surprising that 1 out of 3 women suffer from mild depression, 2 out of 5 suffer from moderate depression, and 1 out of 10 women suffer from severe depression. While the statistics are staggering, much can be done to increase happiness and contentedness and decrease depression.

Sources of Depression

Usually depression is a result of a combination of factors:

- 1) A childhood environment of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, or a lack of consistency in parenting. Adult children of alcoholic parents or domineering parents commonly suffer from depression.
- 2) Situational depression stemming from a poor marital relationship, a troubled child, an overwhelming job, or a range of other stressors.
- 3) Bodily dysfunction, such as food toxicity or a malfunctioning thyroid.
- 4) Genetic predisposition to depression.
- 5) "Learned depression" resulting when children of depressed parents adopt the patterns and behaviors of depression from parents.

What Does Depression Look Like?

Feelings

- ~ Feeling sad most of time
- ~ Feeling that life is just too difficult
- ~ Feeling anxious, cranky, or irritable
- ~ Feeling that there's no hope, that nothing will work out right, or that when bad things happen, it's all your fault
- ~ Feeling helpless
- ~ Feelings of pessimism

Physical Health

- ~ Feeling sluggish or low-energy
- ~ Not wanting to eat, or wanting to eat all the time
- ~ Having stomach pains or lots of pains in other parts of the body
- ~ Having frequent headaches
- ~ Having a lot of heartburn
- ~ Having problems falling asleep, staying asleep, or getting up in the morning

Behavior

- ~ Losing interest in school, sports, work, family, friends, or other activities
- ~ No longer enjoying favorite activities or hobbies, or only enjoying one activity or hobby
- ~ Having more-than-usual trouble with family or friends
- ~ Having trouble concentrating, remembering things, or making decisions
- ~ Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"
- ~ Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- ~ Appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain
- ~ Persistent restlessness or irritability
- ~ Spending most of the time alone
- ~ Rarely being alone

- ~ Using drugs or alcohol to escape
- ~ Attempting suicide
- ~ Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- ~ Using exercise or food to escape
- ~ Inflicting bodily pain on yourself
- ~ Loss of interest in sex

*** Having as few as 3 of the above signs and symptoms can often indicate depression

Do Not Despair! Helpful Options Are Abounding!

1) The first step is obtaining an accurate diagnosis. Do not attempt to diagnose yourself. At times depression can be disguised as something else, such as a thyroid disorder, food toxicity, or attention deficit disorder. So, if you suspect that you might be struggling with depression you should make appointments with a therapist, a psychiatrist, a holistic physician and/or your family physician. Get a full physical and a psychiatric evaluation. You need to get all the facts first!

2) Steer clear of the temptation of use medication as your only form of treatment. Eight out of 10 times depression can be handled without the use of medication. Remember the goal is long-term happiness, contentment, and fulfillment; not just a quick fix!

3) If you do indeed find out that you are struggling with depression, whether mild or severe, a combination of the following treatment options is usually best. On your journey to healing depression, finding a good therapist is a must. Try 3 or 4 different therapists if necessary; feeling comfortable and safe is imperative.

4) Many people have found that a life coach is a wonderful asset in healing depression. A life coach can assist you in creating a balanced and healthy lifestyle as well as creating new and exciting goals. Additionally, a life coach supports and encourages you along your journey, provides caring and understanding, and contributes other gifts tailored to your needs.

5) A healthy diet and exercise plan will play a very important role in aiding the healing of depression. Much research has been done on the positive effects of healthy diet and exercise on depression and depressed moods.

6) Utilizing self-exploration assessments and reading self-help books (preferably books recommended by your therapist or coach) can be a wonderful asset on your journey to healing depression and over-all personal development and growth. When it comes to your emotions, knowledge is power. The more you can learn about yourself, the better off you will be and the sooner you will achieve a content and full life.

7) Developing a strong spiritual connection frequently aids in the healing of depression. This may include traditional worship within a church and/or time spent alone in prayer and meditation.

Depression can be so overwhelming and affects not only the life of the depressed person, but the entire family of the depressed person. Don't wait any longer. Take action, help and healing could be just around the corner.

The road to great emotional, mental, physical and spiritual health is not an easy road to tow, however the rewards are more magnificent than words can describe!

Shawn Byler, Ph.D.
Performance Coach, Consultant and Licensed Therapist
Momentum Performance Development
Phone: 770.739.1598 Fax: 770.739.1893
Email: sbyler@create-momentum.com
Website: create-momentum.com
Create Excellence...