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[Home](#) > Depression and Sadness

Depression and Sadness

Alexander Draghici18K reads

What's the Difference?

When it comes to depression, one of the biggest and most common misconceptions, is to equate it with mere sadness. Given the fact that sadness is one of the main components in depression, this common mistake is somewhat justified.

We're about to explore the main differences between depression and sadness. Knowing how to separate the two makes the difference between letting the problems slip through your fingers, and taking preventive measures.

The banner features the Explorable logo and the text "EXPLORABLE Quiz Time!". Below this are three quiz cards:

- Card 1: Image of red roller skates on a wooden deck. Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2
- Card 2: Image of a fan of colorful pens. Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2
- Card 3: Image of a Ferris wheel at sunset. Quiz: Flags in Europe

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The Unexpected Benefits of Sadness

Sadness is one of the most basic human emotions. It's how your mind responds to small but significant losses. It could be a failed job interview or an argument with your life partner. Whatever the case may be, this emotion allows us to properly deal with life's unexpected hassles, as well as cope with difficulties in a healthy way.

Sadness Is Important

At first, the idea of not feeling sad seems quite appealing. However, if we look behind the

curtain, things are more complicated than it may first seem. The reason why sadness is crucial to our wellbeing is because it allows us to look inside and reevaluate our priorities. Simply put, sadness leads to introspection.

The Dangers of Suppression

Suppressing sadness may lead easily lead to long-term negative repercussions, since emotions don't simply disappear, but rather stay under the surface. This is why a bit of sadness sometimes is completely normal and healthy.

However, if it lasts more than a few of weeks, and comes hand in hand with other symptoms you've already learned about, it's usually a sign of depression. In this case, sadness is no longer functional but instead becomes destructive.

Sadness Doesn't Always Lead to Depression

There are times when sadness is simply impossible to avoid and it may become frustrating. That's because the avoidance approach is self-defeating! Sadness shouldn't be denied or avoided.

It's a natural, healthy emotion that can reveal life-changing insights and help you better cope with life. That's why it is crucial that we accept it as a valuable and irreplaceable part of living. Furthermore, being sad in no way means that you will become depressed.

Next time you feel sad, try not to focus solely on the negative side of your emotion. Instead, use this opportunity to explore the reasons behind your sadness, by using the tips below.

What Is It that Make You Sad?

As you already know, introspection is the key to having a healthy state of mind and a deeper understanding of yourself. Your appetite for self-discovery is what may act as a preventative measure against mental health problems.

Not only will you gain a better understanding of yourself, but you'll also find more constructive ways of coping with depression and other mood disorders, as well as regular, everyday ups and down of normal living.

A Preventative Measure

Looking for reasons and explanations is sometimes hard to do on your own, since being inside the situation robs you of your ability to be objective. That is why it is always useful to seek support from a mental health specialist.

Sadness vs. Depression

One of the biggest differences between sadness and depression is that the former allows you to move on with your life, while the latter keeps you trapped inside your own mind. All those painful memories, plus the added weight of self-blame, can take a toll on your physical health, in addition to your mental wellbeing.

Acknowledging Depression

When it comes to depression, people are not always quick to admit it. It's easier to say "I'm just a bit sad" instead of "I feel depressed. I need help". It is sometime thought that this happens, because people feel some sort of shame, when it comes to impaired mental health.

However, the most crucial aspect of coping with depression, is to understand that there is nothing to feel uncomfortable about. You didn't bring this upon yourself, but you are the only person who can take action, in order to feel better and happier. This all starts with acknowledging your depression.

When to Seek Help

A clear indicator of depression would be the duration of your negative emotions. A sad mood doesn't last more than a few of days. Anything that surpasses 2 or 3 weeks could be a sign of depression, in which case professional help may be of use. You can also look for other signs like the ones described in our previous symptom checklist.

Always keep in mind that depression is a complicated issue. That's why we put a lot of emphasis on psychoeducation. People who understand the basics of depression have a better chance at finding practical ways to deal with this issue.

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