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Published on *Explorable.com* (<https://explorable.com>)

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Everyone Is Vulnerable

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As you already know, depression is one of the most common issues of the contemporary person. Despite of how happy or successful one may be right now, nobody is immune to becoming depressed.

While some might be able to manage certain aspects of depression on their own, depression won't simply go away. It is important to take purposeful action and seek help from a mental health professional, in addition to this guide.

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Depression Isn't New

The first to document depression was Hippocrates who called it "melancholia". As you probably figured out, even in the absence of modern scientific techniques, people were still able to separate depression from other mood disorders.

After almost 2000 years, depression still remains the same. In other words, the basic signs and symptoms haven't changed. The only difference is our approach to and explanations.

Today, people no longer see mood disorders through the mystical lens of ancient times. Depression is not the result of divine punishment, nor a consequence of bad karma.

Instead, we understand that depression may be the result of a vicious cycle of catastrophic interpretations, abuse, adjustment to new circumstances, medications, or even genetics.

Since we have objective knowledge about the causes of depression, it is now very much possible to learn to cope with it.

A Byproduct of Evolution

In order to understand why depression may be a byproduct of evolution, we have to go back in time, even before Hippocrates was born. Compared to modern civilizations, ancestral societies were different in many aspects. Please keep in mind that the following is a mere theory, not a proven fact.

Depression might still be a part of human existence, because throughout the ages it has proven to serve a clear, functional purpose.

First of all, people living in small tribes were more caring to each other. They couldn't afford to lose members, which is why help was often given to those in need. Everyone knows depression usually attracts sympathy and support.

We're not trying to say that our ancestors were faking depression just to gain the sympathy of others. It's just that from a social standpoint, depression had some 'benefits' that may have prevented evolution from winding it down.

Second of all, going through a rough patch or traumatic event makes you vulnerable. Both physical and mental injuries could have easily turned you into an easy prey. The sadness, lack of energy and overall weakness associated with depression, would have forced you to retreat, reheal and reorganize your priorities.

As you can see, depression might not be as dysfunctional as we may think.

Anyone Might Get Depressed

According to a study, conducted by the World Health Organization in 2012, which expanded into 17 countries, 1 in 20 people reported to have struggled with depression in the previous year.

If so many people, in just a year, have dealt with depression, why don't we see depressed individuals more often? Why does it always seem like we're the only ones who struggle with this condition?

There may be several reasons why you don't seem to encounter people with depression, even though it is a relatively common disorder. First of all, if you are struggling with depression, it might be more challenging for you to notice social cues, that demonstrate the suffering of others.

That does not mean you are selfish, but rather that depression can make it more difficult to engage in healthy social functioning. It is, however, something that can be worked upon.

Another reason may be that people try to hide their inner world, or deny, even in front of themselves, that they might be depressed. Unfortunately, not everyone is strong enough to openly discuss depression. However, anyone can learn to be open about depression, as well as seek help and support from others, in order to cope with the condition.

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