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## When It Is More than Negativity

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Although we have, so far, discussed mostly negativity, it's also important to gain an understanding of depression, in case you or a loved one, ever have to deal with way more than just negativity.

Depression has probably existed from the very birth of humanity. Today, it is considered one of the most common psychological disorders and it has been estimated, by the World Health Organization, that by 2020 depression will become the world's second most widespread health problem.

Although in everyday language, it has become common to use the word "depression" lightly, it is a disorder worth understanding. Below you will find some of the most common types of depression.



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## Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)

Also widely known as clinical depression, this condition leads to major changes in the person's life. It also significantly affects, and often even strongly disrupts, the person's ability to work, study, and maintain social relationships.

People struggling with MDD may feel an overwhelming sense of sadness, emptiness, and lack of interest in activities, they have otherwise enjoyed.

## **Symptoms of MDD**

Remember that whenever we talk about symptoms, we are referring to a significant change in the person's usual behavior and way of thinking.

- Depressed mood
- Lack of interest in activities
- Significant change in appetite or weight gain
- A feeling of worthlessness and pointlessness
- Irregular sleep patterns
- Irritability
- A constant feeling of fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Suicidal tendencies

In case you or someone you know has suicidal thoughts and tendencies, the most important thing to do is contact an emergency hotline immediately!

## **Dysthymic Disorder**

The main difference between this disorder and the described above MDD is that those who struggle with dysthymic disorders do so for a longer period – at least two years for adults, and one year for children.

The symptoms tend to be milder, so the individual may still be able to work, study, maintain social relationships and have some interests. However, the symptoms are also persistent, and present in a person's life either every day or almost every day.

## **Symptoms**

The symptoms of dysthymic disorders are similar to those of clinical depression, although they are experienced as less severe and debilitating. The symptoms persevere for about two years, when it comes to adults, and around one year, in children and adolescents.

## **Bipolar Disorder**

The most distinctive aspect of bipolar disorder is that manic symptoms change places with depressive symptoms and vice versa. That is why bipolar disorders are characterized by manic and depressive episodes.

There are a few types of bipolar disorder, and so the severity and longevity of the episodes vary, depending on the specific disorder.

### **Symptoms**

It is important to understand that, with bipolar disorder, both manic and depressive episodes are present, with different frequency and at different times.

#### **Manic Symptoms**

- Highly elevated self-esteem and grand ideas
- Lack of sleep
- Increased speech intensity; sometimes it may be hard to understand what the person wants to convey
- Increased impulsivity
- Bodily agitation

#### **Depressive Symptoms**

- Feeling of guilt or worthlessness
- Loss of interest in activities and social interactions
- Inability to concentrate or make decisions
- Fatigue

- Suicidal tendencies

## **Cyclothymic Disorder**

Cyclothymic disorder is similar to bipolar disorder, but it is, however, characterized by symptoms that are less severe.

Rather than manic and depressive episodes, people struggle with hypomania and mild depression. In adults, the symptoms must be observed for at least two years, for a diagnosis to be made. For children and adolescents, the period is one year.

### **Symptoms**

Hypomania is characterized by a feeling of euphoria, increased self-esteem and willingness to participate in social interactions, as well as various activities, and an elevated risk-taking behavior.

Mild depression, on the other hand, constitutes of all the depressive symptoms listed above, without being debilitating to the individual's functioning. Suicidal thoughts may not be present.

## **Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)**

This disorder is characterized by mild to severe symptoms of depression; that only occur during one season of the year. An important aspect of SAD is that people who struggle with it usually do not report any symptoms, outside of a specific season.

Also, symptoms must persevere over the same season, in at least two consecutive years, for SAD to be diagnosed. One theory suggests that not being exposed to the sun during fall and winter leads to a reduction of serotonin production. However, SAD is not limited to the fall or winter.

### **Symptoms**

- Symptoms of depression that begin with the start of a particular yearly season
- Symptoms of depression that end, as the season comes to an end
- Lack of symptoms during the rest of the year
- Repetitiveness of seasonal symptoms over the years

## **Postpartum Depression**

This disorder relates to the physical, emotional, social and behavioral changes in a woman after she has given birth. It is thought that chemical changes in the body, including accelerated decrease of estrogen and progesterone, are the lead causes for postnatal depression.

According to formal classifications, the definition for postnatal depression is a major depressive episode, which has begun no longer than four weeks after delivery.

### Symptoms

- Lack of desire to spend time with one's baby
- Becoming severely irritated by the baby and fearing that you may hurt it
- Overwhelming fear for one's health, as well as the baby's health, although everything is within norm
- Loss of libido and lack of desire to spend time with one's romantic partner
- Fatigue, lack concentration, indecisiveness
- Severe changes in appetite and sleep patterns
- Suicidal thoughts

## Depressive Psychosis

This disorder is characterized by the same symptoms as MDD, but in addition to that, the individual is out of touch with reality.

People with depressive psychosis may experience hallucinations and obsessive ideas, that are not based on realistic probabilities, and that are negatively related to themselves and their bodies.

### Symptoms

- Symptoms of MDD
- Hallucinations – seeing things that aren't there; hearing voices; sensations on the skin
- Paranoia

- Delusional thinking and behavior

## What Can You Do?

Whether you are fighting depression or have a loved one who is, it is vital to remember that depression is not going to pass by itself, whatever kind it may be. Experiencing depression does not mean that you are weak, nor can it be “cured” by changing your surroundings.

The only way to improve your life is to face the need for treatment and seek professional help. If you, or someone you know, is having suicidal thoughts and tendencies, remember that the most important action to take is to seek immediate help.

The sooner you seek professional help for depression, the sooner you will feel happier.

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