
DEPRESSION

a working check list

I am responding to the invitation for contributions on depression. My basis is fourteen years experience of therapies, and about sixty-two years of feeling depressed, less or more.

I hope the following may be useful as a practical guide. It is not intended to be worked through point by point, but more used as a check list.

Physical

Cut out, or cut down progressively, on all drugs and toxins such as tobacco, alcohol, caffeine, tranquillizers - including TV, 'papers' etc.. (I do not favour 'cold turkey' treatment and would prefer progressive reduction.

Radically overhaul diet and exercise pattern - preferably with a qualified natural health practitioner. High dosage of vitamins recommended and plenty of sunlight (but not too much heat)

I believe a lot of depressives are hypoglycaemic/ sub-diabetic or low blood sugar sufferers. So it is important to keep a reasonably healthy diet.

Try to make your heart rate rise to 120 - 130 beats a minute for five to ten minutes, three or four times a week. Swim - walk - run - dig the garden. Make yourself sweat by your own exertions.

Massage I have found very helpful, either gentle or deep. But it is important to give as well as receive. Try a co-massage session with a friend.

I have found orthodox medicine and doctors bugger-all help. I favour acupuncture and herbal medicine.

Psychotherapy

I subscribe to the view that the bottom line of long term depression is LOSS - of the mother. We remember her lack of emotional reality to us, following the trauma of birth. In the first few weeks or months of life, her early absence, for whatever reason, can cause a feeling of lack of

nourishment that can persist for years, whether we are conscious of it or not.

From this, it seems to me that dealing with our very early unsatisfied needs is fundamental. In my own case, I have combined this primal work with another therapist on an on-going basis. I have also felt benefit and strengthening from gestalt, postural integration, co-counselling and co-regression. I have needed to change my central therapist, but not for quite long stretches of time.

Meditation

I have found all forms of meditation helpful, whether walking meditation, fast or slow, sitting (zazen), chanting, Tai Chi Chuan. These can all help - especially nowadays chanting - when I fall through the 'trap door'.

The support of family and partner are important, and I find that they are affected by the quality of the support I get from a therapist.

Useful books

Fighting Depression Dr. Harvey Ross, Lezchmont Book (US)

Depression and the Body Alexander Lowen Pelican

Depression Ross Mitchell. Pelican

Stress-Proofing Programme Leon Chaitow Thorsons.

Apron Strings John Bowlby, Routledge.

But remember . .

. . . there may be a residual degree of ongoing depression which **nothing** - but nothing - will shift.

John Ridpath

MOVEMENT THERAPY

Individual creative work for working physically and imaginatively with your feelings. This work will start or continue your own creative process that connects your creative expression to your life, and your life back into your creativity. Contacting the body in simple ways for a more instinctive response to your emotions and life issues.

Ring **Caroline Born** on 340 2540