5 Ways to Cope with Concentration Troubles and Depression

by NATASHA DEVINE

Trouble Concentrating With Depression

One of the many difficult symptoms of depression is trouble concentrating. Most people don't realize how much we rely on our focus in daily life until it becomes a struggle.

Trouble concentrating and lack of focus in younger ages can result in poor grades and for adult life – it can cause issues at work, especially in fast-paced, or high-stress environments. It also affects home life though; daily chores become drawn out, daunting tasks, especially if left for too long.

In my experience, I've found that a lack of concentration or focus can also lead to poor memory. For example, trying to read a book and not retaining anything you've read, or not remembering events or details from conversations. There are many areas in our lives that can falter with poor focus.

How to Improve Concentration With Depression

It will take time to regain your focus and concentration. But there are some things you can do to help relieve some of the stress in order to complete a project when suffering from a lack of focus. Here are five ways to cope with trouble concentrating:

1. Be Patient

It can be incredibly frustrating to know that something needs to be done when you don't have the focus or drive you need to complete it. Be patient with yourself and respect your illness; respect that you need extra time but try not to let it take over.

You can help relieve some of the pressure by allowing yourself some downtime or acknowledging that you are easily distracted because then you are given the opportunity to make some changes.

2. Take Notes

If you recognize that you have a tendency to forget what you were doing or details from conversations, then try taking notes. Create to-do lists or keep a journal with you for important details that may come up in conversations like dates or events.

Carrying an updated calendar, even in your smartphone, will not only remind you of upcoming events but it could help keep you on track with your tasks. Most smartphones have the capability to set reminders in your calendars which can be a huge help.

3. Give Yourself More Time

If you have a deadline or are aware of something that needs to be done but you find that you can't focus, then work at it slowly. Allowing for the distractions and lack of concentration will help to remove some of the stress. While it can still be frustrating, especially with a deadline approaching, you'll know that you've given yourself more time to complete the task.

4. Multitasking

This may sound counter-productive but I've found it helpful to have a few projects on the go so that I can switch from task to task as I lose focus. Be careful not to overwhelm yourself with too many activities though. Plan to work on two or three activities and then when you find yourself distracted you have the option of focusing on another task.

At the end of the day you feel incredibly productive because, despite your faltering concentration, you've still managed to complete some of your to-do list.

5. Work and Reward

If you're able to identify a pattern with your focus in that you know you can only concentrate for a certain amount of time, then create a plan to work hard for that amount of time and then give yourself permission to relax.

For example, if you know you can focus for 10-15 minutes then commit to that time period and work hard within those 10-15 minutes. Once that time is up then allow yourself a five-minute coffee break.

Try to plan for more work than relaxation because the longer you relax for the harder it will be to get back into it. As long as it won't add stress to your situation, you can try timer to help you keep track. I find motivation in the challenge of trying to see how much I can accomplish before the timer goes off!

Conclusion

Overall, it's important to respect that you are sick and will need to plan for more time when suffering from lack of concentration. Try using some of the tips mentioned above and find a pattern that works for you.

Commit to a project for only 10-15 minutes at a time, focus your attention on that project for the time span and then relax for a few minutes before going back to it or switching to another task. This will accommodate for the lack of focus while still allowing you to be productive.