8 Coping Skills for People Battling Depression

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8 Coping Skills for Depression

Depression is known for draining your energy, motivation, and desire, which makes it harder to feel better.

While it is true you cannot just magically snap out of depression; you still have some control. Even the most stubborn and persistent depression can be managed and treated.

It is important to note that feeling better takes time, but you can eventually get there. You can start small and work towards making positive daily choices.

I've personally used these coping skills for depression myself and have found that they have helped me manage my symptoms of depression.

Take Action

Recovering from and coping with depression requires effort on your part. But the catch-22 with depression is that taking action is hard to do.

But even the simplest response on your part means that you are doing something.

For example, if all the strength you have today is enough for showering, just do that but the next day, and going outside – if are just sitting on your front porch - to your to-do list. And the following day, take a walk around the block and try something more the next day, and so on.

Stay Connected

Depression makes you want to withdraw and isolate yourself even from those who you have been closest with. And while alone time is okay sometimes, social support is necessary for coping with and recovering from depression.

Stay connected by:

- **Looking for support from loved ones**. Your friends and family care about you and while they may not be able to do anything specific to help, talking to them and having a listening ear can help you to manage some of your feelings.
- **Getting out of the house**. While social media, email, and telephone are great ways to connect, the simple act of being with friends and family face-to-face plays a significant role in reducing depressed feelings.
- **Not giving up social activities**. You may want to withdraw, but it is important that you not give up on the activities that bring you happiness.

- **Supporting others**. Research shows helping and supporting others can boost your mood. Find ways to help by volunteering, helping a friend or by just being a listening ear.
- **Caring for pets**. Pets can bring great joy and companionship to your life. And taking of a pet is a mood booster because it helps you feel needed.

Practice Good Habits

Practicing healthy habits aids both your emotional and physical health.

Make sure you are getting at least 8 hours of sleep, as depression may cause sleep issues. Practice healthy sleep habits, including going to bed at the same time every night and getting up at the same time every morning.

Try relaxation breathing to help to manage your symptoms of depression, sad feelings, minimize stress and boost your mood. Yoga and meditation can also help.

Don’t smoke and drink alcohol in excess as these habits worsen your depression and affect your overall health.

Move

Depression makes the simplest activities discouraging so exercising may not be the list of things you have the energy for. But exercise is a powerful tool against depression.

Exercise will help to boost your mood and help you manage fatigue levels. Try exercising for at least 30 minutes, but even something as simple as a 10-minute walk can improve your mood for at least a couple hours.

Eat Healthy

It might be hard to believe but there are foods for depression which can impact your mood. It is important to minimize foods that adversely affect your mood and brain, including caffeine, processed foods, trans fats, and alcohol.

Make sure you are eating every 3 to 4 hours and not skipping meals.

Stay away from sugars and refined carbs. Foods, such as baked goods, sugary snacks, pasta, and French fries might make you feel good but they will quickly crash your mood and energy.

Vitamin B deficiency can also trigger depression. Eat foods high in vitamin B, such as citrus fruits, beans, chicken, eggs, and leafy greens.

Omega-3 fatty acids can also stabilize mood. Most fatty fish (salmon, herring, tuna, sardines, etc.) are loaded with omega-3 fatty acids.

Get Some Natural Vitamin D

At least one-fourth of the United States population is vitamin D deficient, this according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And several studies link low vitamin D to depression.

Whether you are depressed or not, sunlight can help to boost your mood. You should aim for spending at least 15 minutes a day in the sunlight.

Getting out and enjoying the sunlight doesn’t have to be that hard. Go for a short walk, garden, drink coffee on your front porch or eat lunch at your local diner’s outside patio.

Open your shades and windows to increase the amount of sunshine entering your home. Or try hiking, walking,

biking or another form of exercise outdoors.

Change Negative Thinking

Most negative thoughts are brought upon by depression. Depression puts a negative spin on everything, especially the way you see yourself.

Negative thoughts will overwhelm you if you allow them. These negative feelings are the depression talking and not true of your character.

Try to replace the negative thoughts with positive ones. Take mental note when you feel overcome by negative thoughts and focus on something positive, such as your children or grandchildren or past events that previously brought you happiness and joy.

Seek Out Professional Help

If you have tried to cope and your depression is still overwhelming, get in touch with a mental health professional. If you are already seeing a therapist, you want to fill that person in on your ongoing symptoms.

A professional will have better ideas to help you manage your depression, offer advice to help make living with depression easier, and determine whether you need medicinal therapy or further help.

Helping A Loved One With Depression

If you know someone or a loved one who is living with depression, we have more information on how to help someone with depression with actionable steps you can take to support them through their recovery journey.

Additionally, we've had one of our writers touch on the topic what does depression feel like to help you communicate better with your loved one.