How Long Does it Take to Overcome Depression?

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How Long Does Depression Last?

Depression is a very serious mental health condition that involves feelings of sadness and hopelessness. For many who suffer from depression, they wonder how long it might last. So, how long does depression last?

There's no average timespan for how long it takes to overcome depression, but in minor cases, these feelings can last several months. In more severe cases, the symptoms can be off and on for several years if left untreated.

In this article, we go over why you should seek treatment for your depression symptoms and how long you can expect them to last once you start.

I've been struggling with depression for several years. Below, I provide information based on my personal experience of going through depression treatment rather than that of a mental health professional.

Will Depression Go Away Without Treatment?

If you often talk with your friends about depression, it is not uncommon for them to assume your depression is entirely circumstantial. Maybe you just went through a breakup, or regularly struggle at work.

In any case, friends often encourage you to wait through the tough times. After all, as they say, time heals all wounds, right? While this saying comes from people who mean well, there is not a lot of truth in it, unfortunately. If your sadness is circumstantial, then yes, time does heal. When it comes to depression, however, your quality of life will continue to suffer if you do not seek help.

In my case, I experienced severe cases of morning depression that were so bad I did not want to get out of bed. This, in turn, affected my ability to perform at work, which led to feelings of not being good enough.

In addition to the possibility of facing issues like these, untreated depression can increase your risk of suicide. To avoid this, it is best to seek out treatment as soon as possible to avoid allowing your symptoms to get worse.

Why Treatment Is Necessary and How to Get It

In order to treat your depression, you are going to want to get the help of a mental health professional, such as a therapist, psychiatrist, or both, if necessary. These people are experts in the science of how our mind works and know how to match patients with the proper type of treatment.

In my case, I tried therapy first, then antidepressants. I'd recommend this approach because therapy does not have the negative side effects of antidepressants.

How to Find a Therapist

To find a therapist, you do not need to consult a doctor first. You can use Psychology Today to search for therapists in your area. They even let you filter by the type of therapy offered, insurance they accept, and more.

Make sure you find a therapist who is an expert in dealing with mental health issues like depression. During your search, you may need to try a few therapists before you find one that is a good fit for you. Make sure you trust them.

Going on Antidepressants

After some sessions with your therapist, they may suggest that you go on antidepressants.

In my experience, antidepressants were not a cure-all, but they did help clear the fog and allow me to think a bit more clearly. Essentially, they worked to allow me to effectively perform my therapy exercises.

When it comes to antidepressants, you may need to try a few before you find one that works for you. If you are concerned about the sexual side effects of antidepressants, ask your doctor or psychiatrist if you can try Wellbutrin first. This antidepressant has the fewest sexual side effects.

How to Choose a Psychiatrist

If your depression symptoms are extremely severe (as mine were) your doctor may be unable to help and will refer you to a psychiatrist to further your treatment. Psychiatrists are doctors who specialize in the treatment of mental health disorders. This includes depression.

While therapists help people address the cause of their problems, such as childhood trauma, psychiatrists prescribe and monitor medications to control symptoms.

Just like you need to trust your therapist, it is important that you choose a psychiatrist that you like and trust as well. This will help you maintain confidence in their treatment plan.

With Treatment, How Long Does it Take to Overcome Depression?

When I started my treatment, I started with therapy alone, so things were slow going.

However, once I got on antidepressants, I started to notice things moving in the right direction. The antidepressants brought me to a place that allowed me to focus better on my therapy treatment, so the two forms of treatment worked well together.

While I still experience on and off symptoms of depression, I feel that after one year of treatment, my life is finally at a point where I am feeling more like a normal person. The feelings of sadness and hopelessness are significantly reduced, I am performing well at work again and I am able to enjoy my time with my friends.