

Treating Depression Myth vs. Reality

What are the latest pharmaceutical and other approaches to treating depression?

- Classic antidepressant medications called SSRIs increase Serotonin and work to create the "feel good" chemistry in your brain. There are also newer forms of medication which focus on other chemicals in the brain such as Dopamine and Norepinephrine.
- Other approaches include Ketamine which is supervised by a clinic and administered by IV weekly, Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS), and Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT).
- **How long does it take for these approaches to help me feel better?** Antidepressant medications may take 6–8 weeks to take effect. Ketamine, TMS, and ECT may work faster than antidepressants, but require either continued treatment, or switching to antidepressants after completion of treatment.
- **How long does someone need to stay on medication?** Always consult this with your treatment provider.

What are the latest psychotherapy approaches to treatment and how do I start?

- Common forms of psychotherapy treatment include Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, which helps to identify and challenge thought patterns and behaviors, and Interpersonal Therapy which can help with losses or new responsibilities.
- Multiple forms of psychotherapy can be combined together and psychotherapy is often utilized in conjunction with pharmaceutical approaches.
- Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Clinical Social Workers, Mental Health Counselors, and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners can help treat depression.
- If uncertain about how to start with treatment, contact your Primary Care Provider. You can also speak with your insurance plan, employee assistance programs, clergy, family, or friends.
- **How long does it take for psychotherapy to help feel better?** The full effect typically takes 6–8 weeks. Usually, there is some immediate relief felt.
- **How confidential is psychotherapy?** Everything is confidential. The only exception is if you are of immediate danger to yourself or others.

How can you encourage a loved one to seek treatment?

- Listen.
- Take time for them.
- Take initiative to check-in.
- Provide reassurance of love for them.
- Learn as much as you can about depression including symptoms.
- Become aware of available treatment resources.

What role does physical wellness have on someone's mental wellness ?

- Statistics show that individuals with mental illness die earlier than the general population, largely due to preventable health conditions.
- Depression can cause low energy levels so it is recommended to have a well-balanced and nutritious diet. Vitamin D levels also play an important role in your energy.
- Exercising, smoking cessation, and having a consistent sleep schedule are also crucial.

What is the impact of COVID-19 in terms of treatment?

- CDC survey conducted in October 2020 found that 26% of American adults reported symptoms of major depression and that 32% of American adults reported symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder.
- Crisis lines are experiencing an overwhelming increase and complexity in calls.
- As most services have transitioned to telehealth, waitlists are more common than usual.

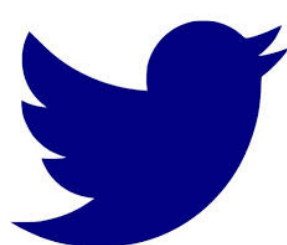
What local and national resources are available?

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 1-800-273-8255
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text "NAMI" to 741741
- **NAMI Maryland:** www.namimd.org
- **Maryland's Statewide Information and Referral (for emergency mental health services):** 211 press 1 or text zip code to 898-211.
- **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance:** www.dbsalliance.org
- **Psychology Today:** www.psychologytoday.com
- **Probono Counseling Project:** www.probonocounseling.org
- **American Psychological Association:** www.apa.org
- **Mental Health America:** www.mhanational.org
- **National Institute of Mental Health:** www.nimh.nih.gov

Data adapted from "Treating Depression: Myth vs. Reality", a webinar originally held on 1/19/2021. Presented by W. Daniel Hale, Ph.D. & Alexis Hammond, M.D. Ph.D. Supported by the William S. Perper Foundation.



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