

UCR | Counseling and Psychological Services

7. **Some people who experience depression have found relief by developing a journal in which they write down their feelings, thoughts, anger, hurts, guilt, or fears.** By externalizing these feelings and writing them on paper, the feelings can be defused and discharged to varying degrees and the energy used in holding them back released for constructive action and problem solving. When such feelings do go unexpressed, they accumulate, fester, and require increasing amounts of energy to keep them suppressed.
8. **Activity scheduling may also be an important strategy in dispelling depression.** By creating an hour-by-hour plan of activities for one's day and working through the plan, it is hard to look back at the day's events and delude oneself into believing that one is helpless.
9. **Sometimes no matter what you do to rid yourself of depression, nothing seems to work. In such instances, it is advisable to seek the help of a professional therapist.** Such a person can help you work out causes and can aid you in developing useful options for yourself within the safe and supportive context of the therapy relationship. You will need to be willing to take an active role in implementing those options. In most cases, depression is a psychological state that does respond to psychological treatment. Improvement does not just happen, however, you must take the steps to bring about the desired changes.

SUMMING UP

Although depression is a common experience for everyone, its causes, maintenance, and resolution are unique to each individual. This suggests that effective relief is often achieved through experimentation – trial and error leading to success. The approaches noted above are intended to provide you with some options with which you can experiment in dealing with depression. Some of them may work better for you than others. No matter which course of action you take, in the final analysis, you will be able to overcome your depression if you become active in your own behalf and if you practice the method(s) of relief that are effective for you.

We offer free confidential services to registered students. Our services include individual, couples, and group psychological counseling for personal concerns and biofeedback for relaxation. Our staff includes licensed psychologists, licensed marriage and family therapists, a psychiatrist, and pre-doctoral psychology interns.

05/16

UCR | Counseling and Psychological Services

HOURS

Monday through Friday • 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

FOR AN APPOINTMENT

Call UCR's Counseling and Psychological Services during regular office hours

(951) UCR-TALK • (951) 827-8255
Or (951) 827-5531
On Campus: 2-TALK (2-8255)

COUNSELORS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE BY PHONE

24-hours Daily

(951) UCR-TALK • (951) 827-8255
Or 951-827-5531
On Campus: 2-TALK (2-8255)

ADDRESS

UC Riverside Counseling and Psychological Services
Veitch Student Center, North Wing
Riverside, CA 92521
counseling.ucr.edu

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CRITICAL RESOURCES

RIVERSIDE HELPLINE 1-800-686-HELP

1-(800) 686-4357 • (24 Hours)

NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE 1-800-SUICIDE

1-(800) 784-2433 • (24 Hours)

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES (951) 827-3031

The original version of this booklet is by Gary Gruver and Vaughn Huff

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be well | STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES

Coping with Depression



CALL 24-HOURS A DAY:
(951) UCR-TALK
(951) 827-8255

UCR | Counseling and Psychological Services

*Depression can hit anyone.
But it doesn't have to linger
and it can be overcome!*

Accredited by
The International Association of Counseling Services, Inc.

BE MENTALLY HEALTHY

BE LESS STRESSED

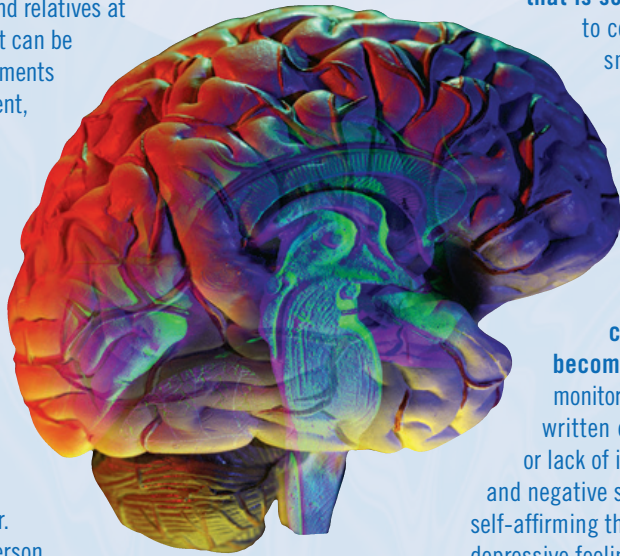
BE WELL

COPING WITH DEPRESSION

Periodic depression can be expected to occur in the normal course of everyone's life. Most depressions are self-limited and relatively short-lived. Those which linger, interfering with normal activities, however, may require active intervention with a professional therapist.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO DEPRESSION

Depression has numerous causes. It can be precipitated by a significant loss of status or health, by the termination of an important relationship, or by the death of a loved one. It can result from a realization of being alone and cut off from friends and relatives at special times of the year. It can be the outcome of disappointments and failures in achievement, or of negative attitudes directed towards oneself. Regardless, the symptoms tend to include low energy, diminished interests and curiosities, apathy, withdrawal and avoidance of others, negativism, self-criticism, inactivity, self-denial, and feelings of helplessness or despair. In short, the depressed person has lost faith in self, others, and in the future.



GET BUSY!

COPING STRATEGIES

What then can a person who is depressed do to rekindle faith and turn life around? As a general rule the answer is "Get busy and do something that will take your mind off your negative thoughts." More specifically, people dealing with depression have found various coping strategies useful. One or more of them may be useful to you too!



- 1. Plan a series of activities that are modest, feasible, and that tap into long-standing personal interests and capabilities.**

The planning process itself can help you break out of your cyclical feelings of negativity as you begin to see that you do have interests and talents! It is wise to avoid taking up some new activity and to avoid tackling a project that is too big for gains to be quickly realized. Such choices are unlikely to lead to quick successes and can even contribute to deepening and prolonging your depression. Whatever you plan, create it so that success in accomplishment is virtually guaranteed.

- 2. A variation on the above technique in counteracting feelings of helplessness is to consider a goal or task that is somewhat difficult.** List all the steps needed to complete it. Now break these steps down into smaller steps and proceed to work through your list of steps. As you complete each step, check it off your list. Continue in this fashion until you have completed all the steps necessary to reach your goal or complete your chosen task.

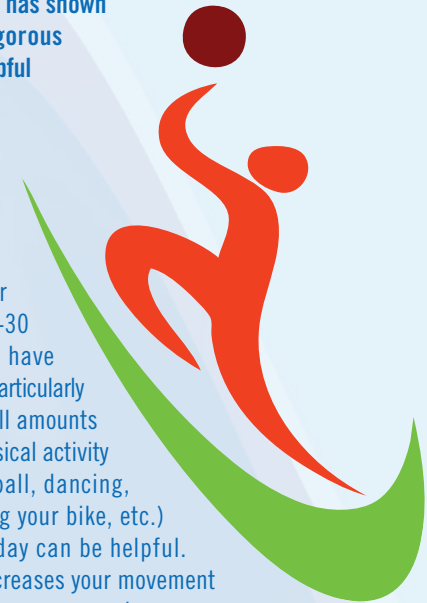
- 3. People who are depressed often talk to themselves in a negative fashion, thereby creating negative thoughts and feelings which become automatic.** These automatic thoughts can be monitored and written down as they occur. After being written down, they can be examined for their validity or lack of it against the "evidence." Replacing distorted and negative self talk and thoughts with more realistic and self-affirming thoughts and assertions can effectively combat depressive feelings.

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- 4. Since people who are depressed often dwell on themselves, it is generally helpful for them to do something to help someone else.** Concentration on someone else prevents people from being preoccupied in their negative loop of bad feelings and also provides the opportunity for them to experience the positive feelings that come from being of service. Helping can be as simple as running an errand for a needy person, listening intently to a friend, or teaching a skill to a child. So – volunteer to lend a helping hand, and reap the benefits that are your just reward.

- 5. Recent research has shown exercise and vigorous activity to be helpful in alleviating depression.**

Running or walking at a brisk pace, or other activities that elevate your heart rate for 20-30 minutes per day, have been found to be particularly useful. Even small amounts of exercise or physical activity (playing basketball, dancing, gardening, riding your bike, etc.) throughout the day can be helpful. Anything that increases your movement can help to improve your mood.



- 6. Mental imagery and the use of your imagination may also prove useful in overcoming depression.**



picturing in your mind's eye situations in which you are behaving in competent and successful ways, you can change your self doubts and criticisms into appreciation of yourself and feelings of self-confidence. Often it is effective to remember situations from your past (prior to depression) in which you have functioned well, then to visualize these situations again while allowing yourself to be fully aware of your success and competence.

(continued on back)

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