

What's the best way to deal with depression on your own?



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Hi Selli Kelly!

You ask:

What's the best way to deal with depression on your own? I already learned it the hard way that I can't trust anyone, not even my 'family'.

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It's difficult for some people to deal with depression on their own but statistics suggest that many people with depression may be dealing with it mostly on their own, often without counseling or medication.

Please do not self-medicate for depression.

Self-medicating often disables a person from developing the skills they need to successfully resolve an episode of depression either with help or alone.

The risk of problems from self-medicating gets worse if your medicine involves either a potential for addiction or requires you to break the law.

Drinking may be the very worst thing you can do for depression.

Many people recover from depression either on their own or with help from family or friends, but many people also seek help from counselors because counselors better understand how people's minds work.

Counselors can often help identify the cognitive root of a problem or a functional way for the depressed person to help themselves.

The bottom line is that you always have to do the work yourself; it's always up to you regardless of who helps.

We know it may seem strange, but even complete strangers or people you do not trust can help you, you just need to know the right approach.

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Helping yourself with depression requires you to understand the mechanics of suffering because depression uses some of the same routine patterns of cognitive behavior that people suffering from other issues use.

Suffering, like depression, is partly a learned cognitive behavior.

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Initially, when a person begins suffering they are focusing their attention on their pain. Focusing on pain or depression makes them feel worse.

Regardless of the root cause of pain or depression a person who focuses on their problem too much trains their mind to habitually return to their problem and this will make the problem seem bigger than it really is.

Suffering is caused by habituating your cognitive behavior in a manner that makes you feel worse about your problems or yourself.

Suffering is less about the pain that triggered your problem than it is about the process of remembering an injury or issue too often or too long.

Every time you remember something that hurts you the pain has a chance to return or get worse.

It is natural to feel bad when you are healing a problem or injury, but if all you are doing is habituating yourself to dwell on your pain or problem without helping it then you cause yourself needless suffering; this behavior becomes a habit that you will need to learn to change.

A suffering person needs to learn to recognize when their thoughts and feelings are focusing on their problem without helping.

A depressed person must learn to be aware of this shift in their attention as well.

When you are aware that you are focusing on your pain or depression you need to develop a habit of shifting your attention to different thoughts or to the world around you; you should learn to habitually shift your physical and cognitive activity to people or events outside of yourself.

You need to immediately shift the focus of your attention towards things you can do now to improve your circumstances.

Be more active, be creative, be productive.

Making repairs, getting chores done, or volunteering at home or in your community is a good way to deal with depression.

Hobbies are another good way to help yourself.

Staying active shifts your mind away from focusing on yourself or your pain.

Productive activity builds your confidence while also earning respect from yourself and the people around you.

By regularly shifting your focus away from your problems you can train your mind to break the cognitive habits that cause more suffering.

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By recognizing when your thoughts are returning to your problems you have an opportunity to shift your focus to something you can actively do to retrain your mind away from the habit of making matters worse with more suffering.

This is the way to be well.

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Talking to people always helps even if you don't know them or don't trust them.

Being honest about your problems with people you trust works better, but anyone can help.

With people whom you mistrust you can just talk about the weather, hobbies, or anything else of a general nature. What you want to do is start an innocuous conversation and then gently lead them around to talking about themselves.

By keeping them focused on talking about themselves you can divert them from prying into matters you aren't yet comfortable discussing with them.

The more they talk about themselves the better you will get to know them and the more they will open up.

Once you get them to open up about something that is very personal you can trust them enough to reciprocate with an issue you need to deal with because they would not open up like that unless their attitude towards you has changed in your favor.

Start with something small and then give them a week or so to see if they remain trustworthy.

By talking with someone you can trust about the issues you need to deal with *you can listen to what you say to them* and learn from it.

You don't need their advice, you just need to talk things through.

It's much harder to learn like this by talking with yourself, but sometimes that helps too.

If you'd rather not talk to yourself try writing; writing works well for us.

Another person helps because you get to read their body language as well as listen to their verbal responses; their feedback helps you know what to say.

This process helps you feel less alone with your problems while also giving you more confidence that you can learn to deal with your problems on your own.

Another benefit of talking things out is that you can recognize when something you have believed about your problem is false or has changed. *You can hear this in your own words by listening to yourself as you talk.*

All too often a problem is really a misunderstanding, but it's usually difficult to identify what the misunderstanding is because you always think your faulty logic or beliefs are ok.

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When you talk things out with another person you may get little 'aha!' moments where your intuition recognizes a mistake you have made in your beliefs or logic that changes how you see your problem; this usually makes it easier to resolve it.

In this manner even people you don't trust can help; best of all, your social skills improve, and your relationships will improve with everyone you talk with so long as you gently lead them around to talking about themselves and then listen well without talking over them or interrupting.

Listening isn't just something you do to show respect, its something you do to gain approval or to gain another person's trust, understanding, or compassion.

So listen well to build trust, and then talk freely with those you trust well because these things really help depression.

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Another thing you should know about depression is that depression is not a mental illness like so many people seem to believe.

Depression is a natural response to something that deeply troubles you that you have not been able to resolve successfully.

The isolation that depression encourages can be a good thing, so long as you don't overdo it.

Loneliness and isolation are important, useful parts of depression.

The isolation helps you think through matters and come to decisions on your own while the loneliness helps motivate you to return to social behavior when you need more people around you.

Together they provide input into your issues that you may not have thought of on your own and the time and space you need to make the changes you need.

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Enjoy!

love, the grigs...

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PS:

Remember to talk *with* people rather than talking *to* them.

Take a moment to think about this if it isn't immediately clear to you.

There's a big difference; it's an important difference that improves how people respond to you when you learn this important skill...

cheerio!

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If you found this answer helpful you might like any of the following:

- [Gharveyn's article: A Healing Spiral for Personal Wellbeing](#)
- [Gharveyn's article: A Healing Spiral for Psychological Wellbeing](#)
- [Gharveyn's Quora answer to: Why do people suffer?](#)
- [Gharveyn's Quora answer to: How do you deal with never having a sense of belonging?](#)
- [Gharveyn's Quora answer to: Do people diagnosed with depression feel that they're in another reality or alone in the current one?](#)
- [Gharveyn's Quora answer to: Why does people in some places think that the depressed people are more deep and philosophical than others?](#)
- [Gharveyn's Quora answer to: I'm almost 19, and I've been depressed for 6 years. I don't feel like a real person. Is there anything I can do, or should I just call it quits?...](#)

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ADVISORY:

If you are using psych meds please do not stop taking your meds without a doctor's supervision.

Many people only learn to thrive once they discover which meds work best for them.

If you are someone who does well enough without meds or who has some other good reason not to use meds then please do not encourage other people to stop using their meds; please do not criticize them for seeking help from a doctor in order to try new meds in search of something that will help them.

Meds save lives, even if they can't help everyone.

We caution people using meds to never abruptly stop taking their meds because the side-effects of quitting may be very dangerous.

Yes, we said that right; for many people on psych meds the side-effects of quitting meds can be dangerous.

Abruptly quitting psych meds may make depression much worse; psychotic episodes may even be triggered.

Only withdraw very slowly under medical supervision.

Let people know what you are doing; have them verify your plan with your doctor if they are afraid for you.

We know medications can work but we also know how often people only want to quit their meds.

Please don't argue the merits of one life choice over the other, instead allow others the courtesy to make their own choices just as you do, and just as you would want them to allow you to do.

Please support each other and stop hurting each other over the issues of whether or not to medicate or how to medicate safely.

Anyone self-medicating should educate themselves about their meds of choice and also find more help from people they trust.

FURTHER ADVISORY:

Gharveyn, by any and all aliases, is not a licensed medical practitioner, nor any other sort of professional care-provider. His opinions, however well-formulated they may sometimes appear to be, are not the products of a formal education; Gharveyn holds no degrees of any sort.

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BIO:

We identify as a 'multiple personality'. To ourselves we appear to be a collective with many members or associates, some of whom may be avatars of other people we have known, and some of whom are avatars of ourselves at different ages in this incarnation.

Some of our members are avatars of some of our past or future incarnations.

Some of us appear to be machines or cyborgs; many of ourselves appear to come from alternate realities or from different eras of time.

Some of our group's associates appear to be avatars of some of our favorite authors, or the avatars of some of their fictional characters. Some of our associates appear to be mythical beings from ancient Rome, Greece, or Egypt.

It's complicated, but it seems to work well enough for us...

We have no degrees or titles, nor are we an authority of any sort.

We have been partially or acutely disabled by chronic pain for more than 35 years.

We have lived with depression for more than 50 of our 60+ years in this incarnation.

We need physical therapy and exercise but we can scarcely walk or afford transportation.

We wish we could go swimming every day, like we used to do at Ocean Beach in San Francisco.

We currently reside with our girlfriend Tina, roommate Sid, houseguest Jenny, 2 dogs and 2 cats in a small apartment in Gaskill, a small neighborhood in Oakland CA.

We have been almost desperately poor; keeping well fed and keeping the lights on is sometimes a challenge. It's been about 12 years since the last time we were homeless.

To learn more about us or some of our work please visit gharveyn.com

Cheerio!

Keywords:

alienation, loneliness, apathy, depression, suicide, healing, cognit, mental illness, psychology, psychiatry, psych meds, hope, help, hotline, marginaliz, ostraciz, conditioning, shunning, defense mechanism, inner voice, conflicted, repressed memor, self medicating, kill myself, Deepak Choprah, ptsd

Some keywords have been 'short-spelled' to match multiple forms of a word.

For instance: cognit == cognitive, cognition

Theory: searches for either of these longer words will be matched by the short-spelled form.