

Symptoms of Depression:

- Feels depressed [mood] or appears depressed to others.
- Interests or pleasure is markedly decreased in nearly all activities.
- Others can see that their activity is slowed down or speeded up.
- Appetite decreased or increased
- Sleep decreased or increased
- Fatigue, low energy, tiredness
- Poor self-image, feels worthless, deteriorated personal appearance or feels inappropriately guilty.
- Reduced concentration or indecisiveness
- Hopeless feelings
- Repeated thoughts about death (not fear of death) or about suicide or has made a suicide attempt.
- Feeling that Heavenly Father is distant, absent and/or indifferent.
- Feeling that prayers are blocked, empty.
- Long-standing grief or tearfulness with little provocation.

Symptoms of Anxiety

- When you feel excessive anxiety, worry or fear that markedly exceeds the normal.
- High levels of motor tension, such as restlessness, tiredness, shakiness, or muscle tension.
- Hypervigilance, feeling constantly on edge, trouble sleeping, or general state of irritability.
- Experiencing panic attacks.
- A specific fear that significantly interferes with life.

When Do I Need Therapy?

Presented at BYU by Dean E. Barley Ph.D., Psychologist, RE: depression

- When I have suicidal thoughts and plans coming to mind frequently.
- When people who love me, who care about me, and know me well tell me I need help.
- When what I usually do to improve my mood and circumstances isn't working.
- When I need more help and support than what my "natural" support system can provide.
- When I simply don't want to feel this way anymore.
- When my symptoms are interfering with my ability to function at home, work, school, or other social roles.

Happy Thoughts

Good friends, spirituality and being married are the top three items associated with happy people, in that order.

Also associated with happiness are: having gratitude and forgiveness when dealing with the past; hope and optimism in looking to the future; and pleasure and a purposeful life in dealing with the present.

However, we must remember that association is not necessarily causation.

Coping Skills



Bridger Winegar
@bridger_w

If I'm faced with a problem, I always take a step back, think a second, and ask myself, "How would someone with coping skills handle this"

THINGS TO DO IMMEDIATELY WHEN STRESSED

- Take two slow deep breaths: breath in through your nose for 4 seconds, hold your breath for 4 seconds, and slowly exhale through your mouth for 4 seconds. Repeat as necessary.
- Fill out a "Daily Mood Log." (Google it in quotes, if you do not have one.)
- Improve your self-talk. (See article on Self-Talk)
- Talk it over with an understanding, sympathetic friend or family member.
- Name the anxiety: if the same issue stirs anxiousness, put a name to it. Naming it makes it common and it becomes a "thing." This will help you think about it more objectively and help put the issue in its proper place. E.g. Here we go again, the "I am running out of money" thought. (from the book *The Happiness Trap*)
- When in front of other people and you are very anxious, try to emotionally withdraw for a few moments while you reframe or rethink the situation. Is it mildly uncomfortable, very important or life threatening? Determine if you calm yourself enough to reengage or need to withdraw. (See article on Anger Control)
- Think about and write down what a passive person would do about it, an assertive person and an aggressive person. The do what the assertive person would do.

SPIRITUAL INTERVENTIONS

- Offer prayers of thanksgiving and gratitude.
- Ask in prayer, "What am I to learn – How am I to grow, from this experience?"
- Ask in prayer, "What should I do next." Or, "What can I do to minimize the effects?"
- Primary tools: Daily prayer, scriptures and pondering.
- See article in this publication, "Enter into the Rest of the Lord and Have Peace."
- Read your Patriarchal blessing.
- Obtain a Priesthood blessing of comfort and counsel.
- Attend the temple.
- Pray and ask for support, strength, courage, assistance, etc.
- Pray as in the poem "Soft Inside Again." (Humble self, tell Heavenly Father EVERYTHING, let the healing begin.)
- Pray as Nephi in the Psalm of Nephi from 2 Nephi 4: Admit sins and weaknesses, list your blessings, say strong, motivational self-talk and pray for additional strength.
- Do the 12 things listed in President Ezra Taft Benson's article "Do Not Despair."
- In imagery, invite the Savior to be with you, to comfort, teach and encourage you. (The Second Comforter)

Continued

DURING AN EPISODE OF ANXIETY

- Read a book. (a comforting chapter in the scriptures or a novel you can engage in)
- Listen to music. (comforting Hymns or other music that soothes you)
- Journal your thoughts, feelings and concerns.
- Seek comfort from spouse or other understanding friend by talking about it. Or maybe talk about it with you visiting/home teacher, Bishop or therapist.
- Get physical to burn off the excess adrenalin from the episode, e.g. go for a long brisk walk or run.
- Progressive muscle relaxation. (you can Google this one, too)
- Choose a “personal scene” – a memory or an imagined setting – that brings you joy and peace. Sitting on the beach at the ocean or in the mountains. Imagine this scene as vividly as you can with sight, sounds, smells, wind etc.

PREVENTATIVE

- Personal health: Get enough sleep (seven to eight hours each night), enough exercise (equal to walking three miles a day four to seven days a week) and good nutrition (for many this includes extra B and D3 vitamins).
- Change any self-defeating beliefs. See chapters 7 & 8 in the book When Panic Attacks.
- Live well one day at a time. Ground yourself in the here and now. Not the past, future or fantasy.
- Fully accept yourself as a fallible human and ponder the full “Serenity Prayer.”

God, give me grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
and the Wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.

Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it,
Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I surrender to Your will,
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.
Amen.

Reinhold Niebuhr

How to Help an Anxious or Depressed Friend

Some of us would genuinely like to help friends and colleagues who suffer from depression and anxiety.

First of all, if a person's depression or anxiety is significantly, negatively, affecting their work, school, home or social life, encourage them to see a psychotherapist to get professional help.

In the meantime, if they are a reader, have them read, study, and do the exercises in one of David D. Burns' three main books: *When Panic Attacks*, *The Feeling Good Handbook* or *Feeling Good: the new mood therapy*.

If they are spiritual, have them read and do the 12 helpful items listed in President Ezra Taft Benson's October 1986 Ensign Article "Do Not Despair." Seriously, we should all do these 12 things continually.

On a personal level, allow them to "vent" Meaning: Validate their thoughts, feelings, circumstances, trials and tribulations. Comfort them with consoling words in the spirit of meekness. Encourage them, especially to come up with a plan to solve their own problems. Or encourage them to minimize the negative impact of an event they cannot change. Often knowing how Heavenly Father wants them to grow or gain experience from the event is very helpful.

Listen attentively to their every word. If they start repeating themselves, stop them and say something like, "let me see if I fully understand what you have shared so far." And then summarize the potent points they have shared. This often stops people from repeating the story because they know they have been heard.

Follow the teachings of Alma to his aspiring converts as recorded in Alma 18:8-10, partially quoted here: "...are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; 9) Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in..."

Standing as a witness of a loving God, who really cares about us, to those who are suffering or mourning gives HOPE! Be a Hope monger. Help them to see every genuine ray of Hope available.

"Hope is the most potent antidepressant in existence." David D. Burns, M.D.

Don't give advice unless asked. Don't invalidate their feelings by saying such things as, "you shouldn't feel that way." Don't one-up them with a tougher trial you or others you know have experienced. Don't tell them it will get better unless prompted by the Holy Ghost. However, you could say, "You will [with help from the Lord and others who love you] get through this." Make certain they understand that Christ understands their situation. That He has descended below it all and has overcome the world. (Alma 7:11-12 and D & C 122:8)

When emotions are blinding their perspective, gently, tactfully, kindly and cautiously help them see a more reasonable perspective, give the benefit of doubt, de-catastrophize the situation, or help them forgive, as case may be. If forgiveness is in order, that must happen on their timetable.

If you are on the front lines and need further help, pray and ask what the Savior would have you do or just sit quietly and attentively with them. – Good Luck.