

Getting a Grasp of Depression: The Road to Mental Health Remedy

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In early May this year, a houseman at Penang Hospital was discovered deceased after allegedly falling from an office building. He had barely been assigned to the hospital for three weeks when the incident occurred. The police department disregarded the case as a "common" condition, and the cause of death was declared sudden. This situation has sparked outrage among colleagues, with numerous anonymous doctors claiming that bullying was to blame. While people were still talking about this issue, they were surprised by another related news a few days later. Shah Alam's Assistant Commissioner reported that the police department received an emergency call about a 19-year-old girl who claimed to "put her mind at ease" while wandering and later sitting alone on the wall of the fifth floor of a shopping complex. A young man who knew her rushed to the location to check on her after noticing her suspicious picture update on her WhatsApp status. He sensed that this young woman was about to take her own life. Fortunately, the prompt action by the authorities managed to save her from the unwanted event.

These two are among the numerous suicide instances, and the news is devastating not only for their families, friends, and relatives but for all of us. People frequently resort to suicide as a means of evading their difficulties. Unsurprisingly, depression causes fifty per cent of the world's suicides (Recognising Signs and Symptoms of Depression, 2021). One of the reasons victims commit suicide is the belief that there is no way out of their circumstances. As they fear being labelled ill or mentally incapable of making decisions, seeking assistance would be their last resort. In certain regions, depression is nearly taboo. People who discuss their experiences are shut down with phrases like "you think too much" or "you're not religious enough to remember God." Not only the stigma but also the current world epidemic and personal conflicts sap the last strength and fortitude, causing an increasing number of individuals to succumb to depression. This insanity must cease, and people must be educated on this mental illness.



Depression is the condition when someone has a mood illness characterised by a continuous sense of despair and loss of interest. People with depression will be affected in terms of thinking, feeling, and behaving, which will cause emotional and physical problems (Mayo Clinic, 2018). Depression does not equal the sadness or grief people experience over a long period. When someone grieves, the grief usually decreases for the longest two weeks before they can finally accept the truth and move on with their lives. This kind of depression is also known as major depressive disorder. Those who suffer from depression do not just find living a typical life complex but also may think life is no longer worth living, and this feeling of worthlessness keeps getting more robust if it is not contained. Besides, the thought of demise will start to appear, especially when they find no other way to remove the feeling, or in the case of losing a loved one, they will probably begin to imagine the relief of being with the deceased. However, grief can coexist with depression, and these two conditions make the illness severe.



The symptoms of depression are not always the same for everyone. Females, males, teens and children all have varied experiences with them. For example, while women get agitated quickly, men show more signs of aggressiveness and anger (Higuera, 2021). Apart from the constant feelings of loss, anxiety, worthlessness, and emptiness, those who suffer from depression can rapidly become irritable and furious and readily cry for no apparent reason.

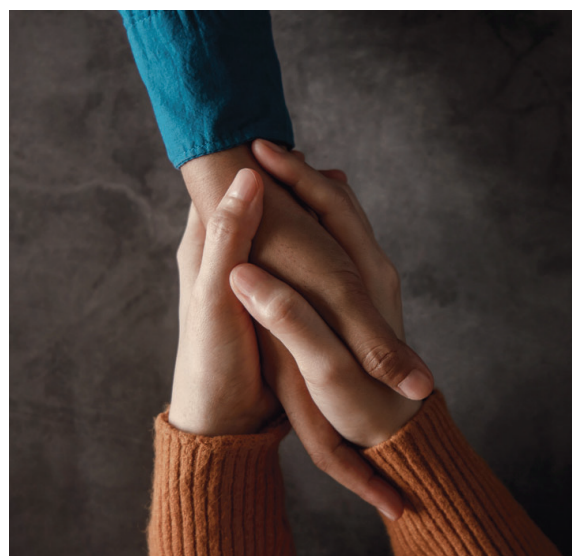
If they used to enjoy a hobby or a routine, depression makes them lose interest. Sleeplessness, exhaustion, and lack of energy are other symptoms that individuals with depression suffer most of the day, including loss of appetite and weight, anxiety, and slower thinking and body response. People may be depressed if they have these symptoms almost every day for two weeks or more.

One frequent question related to depression is, "What causes people's depression?". Answering this question will bring us closer to comprehending depression. Life events are one of the factors that contribute to the development of depression. For instance, those with excessive pressure from their job, overburdened at work, and dealing with additional concerns at home may experience depression if it is not managed effectively. A person is also susceptible to depression when traumatised by a particular situation. One frequent question related to depression is, "What causes people's depression?". Answering this question will bring us closer to comprehending depression. Life events are one of the factors that contribute to the development of depression. For instance, those with excessive pressure from their job, overburdened at work, and dealing with additional concerns at home may experience depression if it is not managed effectively. A person is also susceptible to depression when traumatised by a particular situation.

In other circumstances, however, brain chemistry is likely to cause a person's depression. Chemical levels in the brain play a significant role since a chemical imbalance can result in abnormal behaviour and thought processes (Depression: Types, Symptoms, Causes & Treatment, 2020). In addition, some medications have undesirable side effects. For example, constant use of drugs or the impact of chemotherapy, such as hair loss among cancer patients, also leads to low self-esteem and despair. Personality also contributes to the growth of depression. Some individuals may not be able to handle issues as well as others and may be easily overwhelmed by everything. They do not just let bygones be bygones and continue scrutinising what occurs and lamenting past actions. These individuals are prone to experiencing depression. Even though the possible causes of depression are listed, it is hard to talk to depressed people about them.

Recognising the symptoms and causes of depression is unquestionably beneficial to rehabilitation. The government of Malaysia takes this subject seriously, as evidenced by the establishment of the National Strategic and Action Plan for Suicide Prevention (2012–2016) in 2012. This plan outlines multiple strategies for managing depression, including mental health encouragement, preventive care for psychological illnesses, and suicide prevention training programmes for primary health care professionals (Lew et al., 2022). The Ministry of Health has also developed stress management programme guidelines, including self-assessment tools like the Panduan Menangani Stres.

Once an individual has self-identified or observed the symptoms in others, there are various considerations to make. One must seek assistance as quickly as feasible. Start sharing or conversing about the troubles that accumulate and nest in mind with family, friends or trusted individuals. Depression sufferers who find it easy to communicate with others may phone the health care line as an alternative to seeking professional assistance. A qualified health professional can rule out various causes, ensure an accurate diagnosis, and provide safe and effective therapy.



However, this process will not be successful unless depressed individuals are willing to make good lifestyle changes, such as adopting healthier eating habits, engaging in more supportive relationships, and avoiding negative thought patterns. Additionally, it is vital to educate oneself on emotional abilities. One of the keys is to develop the emotional skills that allow people to effectively handle stress, deal with challenges, and communicate emotions.

To sum up, depression is a serious disorder that has significant potential morbidity and mortality, contributing to suicide, adverse outcomes of medical illness and disruption in interpersonal relationships. It often gets worse if it is not treated, resulting in emotional, behavioural and health problems that affect every area of one's life. It is a real illness, yet help is always available. With proper diagnosis and treatment, the vast majority of people with depression will get to overcome it. Although it can take anywhere from several weeks to months to recover, it is said to be a unique journey and an individual process that everyone goes through differently. It does not only go beyond focusing on managing distressing symptoms but also about having choices and being able to create a meaningful and contributing life. Bad days will still come, but with well-targeted treatment, one should be able to overcome extreme lows and it is entirely possible to live a happy and fulfilling life in spite of it.

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