

Depression

The word "depression" is often used in our everyday life in order to describe feelings of sadness or even to emphasize how much we have been hurt by a situation or by another person. Usually we do not differentiate between depression and some milder conditions such as dysthymia and melancholy. So we cannot say for everyone who states that he/she "is depressed" that they necessarily suffer from acute depression that may require psychotherapy and in some cases medication.

It is natural to feel sad on many occasions; sadness is a feeling, one the rich range of emotions experienced by an individual and it is healthy to be expressed. What more natural than one who is sad when he/she loses a loved one? Any kind of intervention is helpful when the feelings of sadness, helplessness and anhedonia (inability to experience pleasure and joy) are not resolved, they persist and do not gradually give their place to a more optimistic and hopeful attitude towards life. Then we could be trapped in a vicious cycle of emotional and physical symptoms such as:

- Persistent sadness, anxiety or sense of inner void
- Difficulty sleeping
- Lack of appetite or overeating
- Lack of libido
- Irritability
- Lack of energy, fatigue
- Difficulties in memory, concentration and decision making
- Feelings of guilt, hopelessness and despair
- Suicidal thoughts
- Various persistent physical symptoms such as headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances etc.

All these symptoms do not only end up deteriorating our mood but also affect all of our bodily functions – including brain functions – making it even harder to get out of this cycle. As a result the symptoms could become more intense and chronic.

There may be several causes for the emergence of depression; there may be biological factors, psychological and environmental (social) factors so its treatment may not be one-sided. The administration of medication could be useful to restore the chemical balance of the brain and bring a first relief of the symptoms, but they do not provide a definite solution.

Body and soul are interrelated and psychotherapy is there to restore the emotional balance, to maintain this balance over time and to provide the client with "tools" that will help them effectively manage the difficulties of life.

It is advisable to visit a mental health professional as soon as we notice symptoms that complicate our lives and before they overwhelm us, as we would do for any other health issue.