

Coping with Depressive Feelings

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People in your life might be telling you to “just get over it” or “just stop thinking about it”, but that’s not how sadness and depression always works. We might have to change some of the ways we live our lives day to day. If you or your child are having a hard time dealing with some tough feelings and emotions, try some of the tips below.

1. **Treat any physical illness:** Have you been having migraines or constant headaches? Maybe some knee pain for a long time? We emotionally suffer when we are in pain. It interferes with many daily activities and our quality of life. Take care of your body, see a doctor when necessary, take your medications as prescribed.
2. **Balanced eating:** Eating too much or too little brings on negative emotions. Pay attention to what foods make you feel over emotional and which ones make you feel good after you eat them. That junk food may taste great when you are eating it but the guilt and self negativity afterwards is not worth it. A balanced diet is important because your body needs proper nutrition to work effectively. Keeping healthy snacks with you when you are out of the house is a great way to curb that desire for unhealthy foods.
3. **Avoid mood-Altering drugs:** Drug and alcohol use can lead to both short and long-term changes in the brain, which can lead to mental health issues. Compared with the general population, people addicted to drugs and/or alcohol are twice as likely to suffer from depression and anxiety.
4. **Balanced Sleep:** Try to get the right amount of sleep each night that makes you feel good in each morning. Lack of sleep tends to make us more sensitive to emotional triggers in our lives. A symptom of depression is sleeping too much, and unfortunately too much sleep can actually worsen a person’s depression. If you are trying to go to sleep and are still awake after 20 minutes, get out of bed and try to do an activity that can use up any remaining energy. Go into another dimly lit room and read a magazine, eat a small snack, drink something warm (decaffeinated). If you’re not sure what your balanced sleep amount should be, keep a log for a few weeks of how many hours you had and how you emotionally felt each day to find out the best number of hours per night for you.
5. **Get Exercise:** Do some sort of small exercise each day, try to build up to 20 minutes daily. Regular exercise can have an amazingly positive impact on depression, anxiety, ADHD, and more. It also relieves stress, improves memory, helps you sleep better, and boosts your overall mood.

6. **Build Mastery:** Try doing one thing a day that makes you feel competent and in control. It is easy to undermine our efforts when we do simple everyday tasks like taking care of our hygiene, preparing a meal or doing the dishes. However small it seems, notice the fact that you did put effort into these activities and that they are important to you. Are there some other important activities that can contribute to your sense of accomplishment and effectiveness? Take a little time and think about it.

Everyone goes through emotional struggles in their life at one point or another. Being mindful of the tips above can increase your ability to deal with those tough emotions more effectively.