

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.

Things that have helped:

Different things help different people; some items have no effect on some people. People go from depressed to OK then hopefully to happy.

1. Work Ezra Taft Benson's 12 step plan as outlined in the talk, "Do Not Despair" Oct. 1986 Ensign.
2. Improve your personal relationship with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
3. Repent of any significant sin. Change those ways. Forgive yourself if you have repented! Be temple worthy.
4. Regular exercise. Such as walking 2-3 miles per day four to seven days a week.
5. Read and study Dr. David Burns' book, *"The Feeling Good Handbook."*
6. Eat good food; stop the caffeine and other harmful substances.
7. Get regular sleep/rest for as long as your body needs, like 7-8 hours per night, every night.
8. Force yourself out of bed after 9 hours, if you have to.
9. Become involved with the church's network of caring people.
10. Develop and maintain healthy and meaningful friendships.
11. Self-soothing:
 - a. Take personal care of yourself, "Calgon bath", paint your toenails, time for you!
 - b. Affirmations. Positive self talk, goal setting, time management.
 - c. Stress management, relaxation techniques, slow down, and do less, but not less spiritual things.
 - d. Not escapes, they provide temporary enjoyment but are not soothing! ~~TV, games, etc.~~
12. Say a meaningful prayer every day. Fast as appropriate. Ponder spiritual things during the day.

13. Read from the Book of Mormon at least 10 minutes every day. Ponder what you have read or how it applies to you.
14. Sing or listen to hymns and other sacred music every day. Memorize hymns, especially soft soothing hymns like "How Gentle God's Commands" or "As I Search the Holy Scriptures."
15. Give meaningful service to others. Get outside of yourself.
16. Receive a Priesthood blessing.
17. Work, Work, Work. Get a job. Volunteer. Clean your house or the garage. Serve your family, church or community. "Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership".--CR, October, 1936:3
18. Think about and discuss your issues with an appropriate person. If the issues are with your spouse, discuss only with your spouse, bishop or therapist. Issues with things and other people may also be discussed with other caring, loving, understanding friends that are close to you.
19. Cultivate an optimistic outlook on life. "Look To The Future With Optimism", Elder Jack H. Goaslind, Ensign, April 1997
20. Learn to endure the trials of life. Figure out which ones you cause yourself and reduce those but accept and deal with the rest.
21. Read Ensign and other church literature on topics in this list, e.g. optimism, depression, exercise, stress management, etc.
22. Get professional help if needed as suggested below.
23. See a medical doctor for a full physical to see if anything is physically wrong or if you need medication. Medication is after you really try the other stuff above or when you are seriously dysfunctional. Not just because you want to be better now.

When Do I Need Therapy?

Presented at BYU by Dean E. Barley Ph.D.

- 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 in other social roles.

Good friends, spirituality and being married are the top three items associated with happy people, in that order. Also associated with happiness are: in dealing with the past, gratitude and forgiveness; hope and optimism in looking to the future; pleasure and a purposeful life in dealing with the present. To be happier we need to work on all nine.