

Preventing Depression - limiting susceptibility to long-lasting depression

Can depression be prevented? The answer is "no, not completely". It may not be possible or even desirable to prevent times of discouragement, but long lasting depression can be prevented. Here are several ways this can be done:

- Expect disappointment.

When we are realistic enough to expect pain we can handle discouragement better and often keep from slipping into deep depression.

- Learn to handle anger and guilt.

Some people slide into depression because their minds dwell on past injustices or failures. This serves no useful purpose. If people can learn to handle their anger and guilt, much depression can be prevented.

- Challenge thinking.

They say we each talk silently to ourselves all day. Maybe we should notice what we say. It should be positive and encouraging. When we learn to challenge our discouraging thinking, this can also prevent or reduce the severity of depression.

- Learn from others.

If we can see how others cope and then learn how to cope ourselves, circumstances may seem less overwhelming and depression is less likely.

- Have support.

People who are not lonely or isolated are less inclined to get depressed. A concerned group of friends who are caring can do much to soften the trauma of crises and provide strength and help in times of need. Aware that they are not alone, people in crises are able to cope better and thus avoid severe depression.

- Reach out.

Alcoholics Anonymous has demonstrated conclusively that needy people help themselves when they reach out to assist others. Those who help are the ones who benefit and are helped the most. When we reach out to help other people, this does wonders to keep ourselves from being depressed.

- Encourage physical exercise.

Since poor diet and lack of exercise can make people depression-prone, people should always be encouraged to take care of their bodies. A healthy body is less susceptible to mental as well as physical illness.