

HRIC
HELPFUL
HINTS

**IMPROVING
A DEPRESSED
MOOD**

While experiencing a depressed mood that seems perpetual, you find yourself incapable of meeting expectations. Feelings of low self-worth, guilt and shame begin to engulf the individual as they endure the inability to explain it- "I'm sad, but I don't know why" they say. Managing depression requires both medication and psychological help. Knowing how to manage one's emotions is key to maintaining and restoring mental health. Here are a few suggestions to manage a depressed mood:

Sleep - A well rested brain functions better. Lack of sleep exacerbates the symptoms of depression. Practice keeping electronic devices away before bedtime as its blue light decreases melatonin levels that help you to sleep. Thoughts and residual stress can keep you up at night. Unwind from the day and settle into a comfortable sleeping environment. Avoid evening naps and cut down on caffeine.

Mindfulness and flow - Practice re-centering yourself through meditation or by simply taking a minute to focus on your breathing. It improves circulation and trains you to be in the present. Immerse yourself in the present through getting creative by painting or reading a novel. It will help you to reach a mental state of flow.

Calming your senses - Listening to soothing music in the morning or your favourite radio jam is a good way to let go of your feelings. Similar to music, scents like that of essential oils, lavender and lemongrass are calming to your senses, making you feel refreshed.

Eating healthy - Physical wellness is woven into one's mental well-being. Maintaining a healthy diet and a well-balanced meal with adequate fluids prepares your body to function during stress.

Being active - Physical activity releases endorphins that counter faulty mechanisms in the brain. It tackles symptoms of depression and associated health concerns. Exercise is a healthy way of coping that lets you focus and be in control. 15- 20 mins of moderate exercise daily provides lasting positive effects.

Challenging negative thinking - Fixed positions and cognitive distortions arise due to a faulty perceptions and brain mechanisms. Pay attention to how your thoughts translate into actions. Consider journaling these and observe if the response was based on facts or an incorrect assumption. Understanding what you felt precisely, how your body reacted to it and what triggered the feeling will help you to be more in control and give you new ways of coping.

Gratitude - Being grateful for the small things as well as the meaningful relationships you share lets you to appreciate where you are. It reflects in your actions making these relationships stronger.

Suicide - Thoughts of suicide may be fleeting but should be considered serious. If you ever find yourself here, immediately get in touch with a friend who can talk to. This is important as your judgment may be compromised. Many resort to having a permanent solution to their hopelessness and pain. However, those who go onto survive are often thankful that they did.

Substance dependence - Substance use for temporary relief not only worsens existing symptoms but becomes another disease to battle. Reach out to professionals who can guide you in managing your emotions.

Here are a few local resources that could be helpful:

- Dubai Foundation for Women and Children 04 606 0300
- The Indian Workers Resources Centre 800 46342
- Erada Centre for Treatment and Rehab 04 2399992
- Community Development Authority 04 2510115
(For Emirati Nationals)

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