

Hello,

I'm Dr. Charles David Tauber, CEO of the Coalition for Work with Psychotrauma and Peace, the CWWPP. To see more of what we do, please have a look at our website, [www.cwwpp.org](http://www.cwwpp.org). There, you also can give your comments on this podcast and make suggestions for the new ones.

Today we're going to talk about depression. Depression is fairly common in a large number of people. The number is increasing.

What is depression? Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest in things you once enjoyed.

We will look at the symptoms, the causes, and the consequences of it. Depression can be extremely debilitating, and it can cause a lot of dysfunction in people.

Some people make a distinction between sadness and depression.

We don't know how many people suffer from depression because not everybody reports it. People are sad a lot of the time. The question is, what the threshold is for calling it depression and when is it "only" sadness?

Both men and women suffer from depression, women more than men. Depression often begins in the teens or the early 20s. A large number of people between the ages of 45 and 65 suffer from it.

Depression can be inherited, but that is be disputed. It can be genetic or transmitted (meaning, if you are around people with depression, you may get depressed). That occurs in a lot of people.

There are many different types of depression.

- Major depression or standard depression is long-term sadness, long term loss of interest.
- Peripartum depression or depression around the birth of a child can affect both men and women. It's not only women who get it.
- Women with Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD) have depression at the start of their menstrual cycle.
- There is also Seasonal Affective Disorder – SAD – that occurs at the end of the year at the holiday time. It's known that this has to do with light, so it may be treated by a very strong light early in the morning.
- Bipolar syndrome is manic-depression, which means that people go from highs to lows. This can occur cyclically or randomly.
- Psychotic depression occurs with a loss of reality in person, place, and time, and with changed manners of thinking.

- We can make a differentiation between so-called endogenous depression, which is organic, and reactive depression, which is a reaction to events. Reactive depression occurs very frequently.
- There can be persistent depression, chronic depression, and situational depression,.

There are several psychological causes of depression.

- Depression can be transmitted from one person to another.
- If you are in a situation or if you are around people who are depressed, then you may get depression as well.
- Trauma can cause depression. Particularly trauma in early childhood can cause a variety of psychological reactions.
- Low self-esteem is another cause. If you have a low opinion of yourself you may get depressed.

There are a lot of triggers that can cause depression, such as certain days of the year, certain seasons, or remembering certain events and circumstances. There are a lot of things that can be triggers.

Some people experience depression due to medical causes such as thyroid problems and vitamin deficiencies such as those of vitamins B and D. Chronic illness can cause depression. Drugs can cause depression, that is, certain therapeutic drugs, and abuse of certain substances. That can be a vicious cycle. Depression can cause the use of drugs, and the use of drugs can cause depression. Physical pain also can cause depression, and depression can cause physical pain. There are many other medical causes of depression. If you feel depressed you should get checked out by your doctor.

What are the symptoms of depression? The expression of depression is very individual, and each person is slightly different in this.

- One of the major symptoms is feeling sad. There is also a loss of pleasure in things that you once enjoyed.
- weight gain or weight loss;
- changes in your sleep patterns. Both sleeping too long or lack of sleep can be a sign of depression;
- loss of energy;
- tiredness;
- increase in purposeless activities such as pacing, doodling, clicking your fingers, tapping with a pencil.
- You may slow down your movement.
- Speech may be slowed down.
- You may feel worthless and have a low self-image and/or feeling guilty about things.
- Very typical for depression is difficulty in thinking, concentrating, and making decisions. That's very important in many cases.
- You may think of death, and you may think of suicide. That can be dangerous, and it can go over to a suicide attempt.
- Sexual dysfunction and losing thoughts about sex are common signs of depression.
- Behavioral issues, particularly in children, can also be signs of depression. Children can misbehave. Adults can misbehave.

Some diseases can worsen with depression: arthritis, asthma, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and weight problems.

A further consequence of depression can be social isolation. That can also be a vicious cycle. If you are depressed, you isolate yourself from people. Also, isolating yourself from people can get you depressed.

People who are depressed may self-harm. They cut themselves, burn their skin, and do other kinds of things to hurt themselves.

Suicide can be a result of depression.

Panic attacks can be a consequence of depression.

Depression can be a reaction to difficult events. It's ok and not so bad to be depressed or sad after a loss or other difficult situations. You should not condemn yourself, and you should not feel guilty because you are depressed.

The point is to find mechanisms for yourself to deal with the depression. There can be many mechanisms. We have already mentioned some of those in previous podcasts.

Get your feelings out. That is very important. Write, do art, do music. We have a whole podcast about that. Talk to people. That is also very important. Keep talking when you are depressed. Don't pull back. Do things you like. Reevaluate the situation and reframe it. Try to give it a different context, put a different light on it.

Mourn if you have had a loss.

Something that helps with depression is exercise. Go walking or running, do exercise outdoors or indoors, but do something.

Aside from all the possibilities mentioned above, there are other treatments for depression. There are drugs such as antidepressants. They are useful in some circumstances. For seasonal depression, sometimes light helps. There are a lot of alternative therapies and quite a few natural remedies for depression.

It's frequently difficult for you who are working with people who have depression. Being around somebody who is depressed is not easy, and you may get depressed as well. To avoid that, you must talk to somebody. Look at our podcast about that. Get assistance, get psychological supervision. Talk to another person who is dealing with this. Care for yourself. Know your limits about dealing with a person with depression. Maintain balance in your life, do things you like, but talk to somebody about this.

Depression is common, and it's getting even more so. It's an important phenomenon.

If you are depressed, get help. Talk to somebody and do something about it.

Thank you for listening to this podcast. I hope that it assisted you.

See you next time.