

# Mental Wellness For Everyone



---

activities to do, medicines to ingest, nutrients to fortify, foods to eat, and thoughts to think for anxiety, sadness, fatigue, apathy, insomnia, oversleeping, pessimism, thoughts of death or suicide, and helplessness

---

Written by Sage Liskey  
Illustrated by Janine Hesse



# About This Booklet & Medical Statement

The writing of this booklet was inspired by a desire to help friends manage their depressive episodes. My experience with depression includes leading community self-help groups, acting as a peer counselor, and managing it in my own life. This guide attempts to take a look at all options in coping with depression which are backed by scientific research or my personal experience. It is an introductory guide, not a comprehensive one, and further research should be done regarding many of the topics discussed. While I strongly believe in the methods outlined in this booklet, **I am not a medical professional and none of this is meant to be medical advice.** Furthermore, even though **primarily peer-reviewed research** was used to collect information, new discoveries are being made every day within the scientific community. **I therefore do not guarantee the accuracy of the information contained herein.** Ask a doctor, herbalist, nutritionist, or other health professional before trying these methods, or otherwise use them at your own risk.

## Editors

Sam Bennington, Jared Swanson, Julia Whisenant, Emma Banks, and B.S.

## Illustrators

Josh White: "About the Author." Kerrida Hall: Molecules in "Nutrient" section.

Janine Hesse: All other illustrations.

## Printing History

1<sup>st</sup> Edition / August 2012

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition / December 2012

3<sup>rd</sup> Edition / March 2013

4<sup>th</sup> Edition / August 2013

This work continues to be updated, thank you everyone for helping get it this far!

Do not reproduce this booklet without the consent of the author.

Published and distributed by the Rad Cat Press 2013.

Printed in Cascadia on 100% Recycled Paper.

# Table of Contents

## Introduction:

### You Have Options (1)

### What Is Depression? (3)

### The Road Map of Coping (5)

- Awareness of 'Potentials' and 'Triggers' (5)
- Forming and Deforming Habits(6)

### Activities and Hobbies (8)

- Schedule Your Week (8)
- Meditation, Mindfulness, and Prayer (9)
- Writing (11)
- Gardening, Farming, and Soil Bacteria (12)
- Smile and Laugh! (13)
- Make Art and Craft (13)
- Light Therapy (14)
- Listen to Music and Background Noise (14)
- Friendships, Relationships, and Community (15)
- Sex, Masturbation, and Pornography (16)

### Taking Care of Your Mind and Body (17)

- Food (17)
- Nutrients (Vitamin D, Omega-3 and Omega-6 Fatty Acids, B Vitamins, Zinc, Selenium,

Calcium, Vitamin C, Vitamin D, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Potassium,) (18)

- What To Avoid (Sugar, Cigarettes and Coffee, Caffeine, Marijuana, Alcohol, Pollutants) (23)
- Sleeping and Awakening (27)
- Exercise (29)
- Pregnancy and Preventing Your Child From Developing Depression (30)

### Medicines for Depression and Anxiety (31)

- Pharmaceuticals and Doctor Prescribed Drugs (32)
- Herbal Medicines (St. John's Wort, 5-HTP, Valerian, Lavender, Ginseng, Golden Root, L Theanine (Tea), Coffee(?), Marijuana(?), Other Herbs for Anxiety and Sleeping) (32)
- Psychedelics (35)
- Ecstasy/MDMA (36)

### Thoughts for Change (37)

- Maintain A Positive Environment (37)
- Therapy with Friends and Family, Professionals, Support Groups, and Pets (38)
- Staying In Tune With 'Reality' (39)

- Image and Acceptance of Who You Are (40)
- Find Purpose and Meaning In Life (41)
- Beliefs as Covers for Depression (41)
- Coming to Terms with a Traumatic Past (42)
- A Section for Teenagers: Coping with Factors Beyond Your Control (42)
- Activism and Depression (Balance Time, Cultural Deprivation and Creating An Alternative Culture, Privilege and Guilt, Blame and Oppressive Anti-Oppression, Substance Abuse, Make it Fun) (43)

### **Managing A Depressive Episode** (46)

- If You Have A Depressive Episode (46)
- If You Have A Depressive Episode Associated with a Negative Occurrence (46)
- If Someone You Care About Has A Depressive Episode (47)
- How To Know When You Should Talk To A Medical Professional (48)

### **Resources** (49)

- Icarus Project (49)
- Mind Freedom International (49)
- AllAboutDepression.com (49)

- The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching (49)

### **Conclusion** (50)

### **Bibliography** (51)

**"My Mind"** (END)

### **About the Author** (END)

# Introduction: You Have Options

The feelings of sadness, fear, and stress are an essential part of the human experience. They can provide great learning opportunities by forcing a person to slow down and think about the world from another perspective. On the other hand, these feelings can be symptoms of depression, a condition that causes a self-perpetuating mindset of negative thoughts and emotions. While it is natural to experience depression, and in many lives impossible to avoid, it may not allow for a feeling of contentment, and so is worth dealing with. Coping with depression is not about rejecting one's personality or striving for constant happiness; it is about learning to healthfully balance thoughts and feelings in order to live a content life.

Anyone can become depressed when the right factors are in place, especially today with so many triggers present throughout modern society. In fact, mild to severe depression affects millions of people worldwide (Biomed). In the United States, most cases of depression are treated with pharmaceutical drugs. Pharmaceuticals work best for some people, but you should know some things about them. First, the majority of people prescribed pharmaceutical antidepressants only feel better from a placebo effect (Villarreal). These medicines are only effective for persons with severe depression, and have little to no impact on persons suffering from mild depression (Fournier; Kirsch I). Furthermore, even though they do work for some people, scientists are still unsure as to why (Krishnan). They are often portrayed as simply increasing serotonin<sup>A</sup> levels, but a high or low level of serotonin has not actually been directly related to depression (Hirschfeld). Secondly, there are other options, many of which may work equally well or better, are cheaper, come with fewer side effects, and actually deal with the root cause of depression such as malnutrition, inactivity, a stressful environment, or a traumatic past.

The following sections are intended as an introduction to help you to identify depression, learn methods of controlling it in yourself, as well as provide support to others. Most of the methods outlined will work with pharmaceuticals,

---

A One of the neurotransmitters thought to be connected to feeling happy.

but be sure to see a medical professional before mixing any sort of herbal remedy with a prescribed medicine, or going off of your medications. There is no single cure-all that works for everyone, but there are many options for finding out what works best for you.

# What Is Depression?



Depression is a combination of 'potentials' and 'triggers.' A person's 'potential' to experience depression stems from their genetics, nutrient intake, exterior stimuli in the environment, habits, as well as past occurrences. Things like low levels of serotonin and norepinephrine do not cause depression as is often cited, but only increase the potential of experiencing depression (Hirschfeld). 'Triggers,' which put a person into the state of depression, can include just about anything depending on the person, though some triggers are more common than others. These include things such as the intake of certain substances, a stressful event, or not sleeping enough. Even a 'potential' can act as a 'trigger' with factors like sleeplessness and malnourishment.

One's various 'potentials' and 'triggers' make depression manifest in a number of ways. According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine, signs of depression include the list on the next page.

### Signs of Depression:

- Sadness, anxiety, or "empty" feelings
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities that were once enjoyed, including sex
- Insomnia, oversleeping, or waking much earlier than usual
- Loss of weight or appetite, overeating, or weight gain
- Feelings of hopelessness and pessimism
- Feelings of helplessness, guilt, and worthlessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Difficulty concentrating, making decisions, or remembering
- Restlessness, irritability or excessive crying
- Apathy
- Chronic aches and pains or physical problems that do not respond to treatment
- Low self-esteem
- Sudden bursts of anger and a lack of pleasure from activities that normally make you happy

(MedlinePlus)

These physical and mental changes that depression causes can seemingly slip into one's life without much reason. In an attempt to explain the new mood, a person might blame it on how their life is going, or something unrelated that happened days or weeks prior. What's more, depression is easy to become accustomed to, at times making it difficult for one to even want to feel any other way. Depression can also be accompanied by other conditions with somewhat similar symptoms such as mania and schizophrenia. This is why awareness of the symptoms of depression as well as one's potentials and triggers is essential to coping with depression.

# The Road Map of Coping

If you are reading this, you are probably already aware that you experience depression. This acknowledgment, along with a desire to live a more content life, is the first step to coping with depression. The next step involves becoming aware of the 'potentials' and 'triggers' that form your depressive episodes. Once you are aware of the mechanisms behind your depression, you can begin to reform habits, environments, thoughts, and how you treat your body. The goal is to create long standing contentment and stability, rather than short term happiness. Note that this will take time and a certain amount of trial and error. For many, coping with depression is a lifelong process, and will involve changing one's lifestyle and way of thinking as personal discoveries are made.

## **Awareness of 'Potentials' and 'Triggers'**

To become aware of your 'potentials' and 'triggers,' write about your depressive episodes, and discuss them with friends, counselors, and family members. For 'potentials,' explore what your childhood was like, whether or not depression runs in your family, and your nutrient intake. As for 'triggers,' what event or events triggered the episode? How did it make you feel? How did the episode end or what alleviated your emotions? Form the 'triggers' into a simple and accessible list of direct consequences. For example, "If I don't \_\_\_\_\_, I will feel \_\_\_\_\_." Or, "If \_\_\_\_\_ happens, I will feel \_\_\_\_\_." See the end of this booklet for a helpful 'My Mind' sheet to fill out. Reading this list will help you acknowledge that there is a reason for the way you feel and that it is not the norm. In this manner, you can focus on dealing with the cause rather than the negative thoughts and feelings created from being depressed. It will also give you a road map of what you need to do in the future in order to feel content and prevent depressive episodes.

## Forming and Deforming Habits

With awareness of your 'potentials' and 'triggers' you can begin altering your habits.. Habits are both physical and mental. You might have a habit of brushing your teeth, or of panicking when you see someone. According to Charles Duhigg, a habit has three parts to it, the “habit cues,” the habit itself, and a reward for performing the habit (Gross. Habits). Once the habit has initiated, the brain actually automates the task and is free to think about other thoughts and actions. Everyone forms habits at a different rate, though three weeks has become a popularized number for people to strive for when attempting to embed a new habit (Layton). If one is performing the behavior regularly enough, it should stay permanently wired within their neural makeup after this amount of time (Delude). This is great for healthy habits, but also makes breaking an unhealthy one exceptionally difficult. Even if we do break a habit, “habit cues” can quickly make the habit reform (Gross. Habits). This is especially challenging as the rewards for a bad behavior are often more immediate than the rewards for a good behavior. So how can you change your behaviors?

### **Tips for forming habits:**

- Repeat the behavior often, at regular intervals (Layton).
- Start small. Form one habit at a time, and perform that habit a few times a week rather than every day (Layton).
- Schedule the habit with specifics of when and for how long. For instance, for 30 minutes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 9:00AM I will \_\_\_\_\_ (Layton). If your work or life schedule shifts around, make a time reference to accommodate it, such as “when I get off work” or “after I eat dinner.”
- Make the reward for the habit visible. Keep a daily log of how you feel from performing the habit, or treat yourself to something nice (but healthy!) for accomplishing the behavior.
- Work on forming the habit with someone else, such as an exercise buddy. This way you will both feel obligated not to skip your exercise schedule. You can also seek help through counselors, therapists, and support groups.

**Tips for deforming habits:**

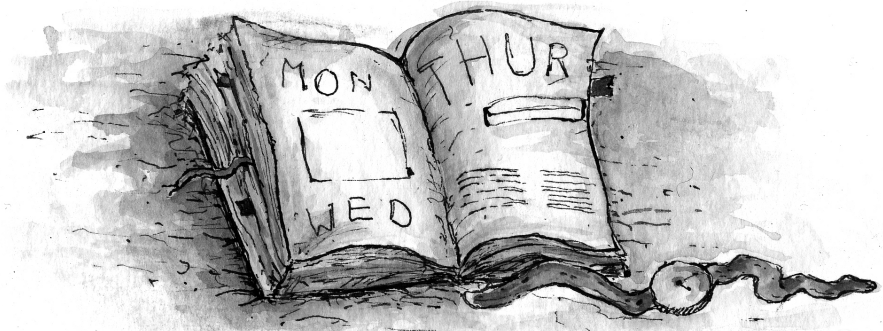
- Recognize the “habit cues” and rewards for a given habit (Gross. Habits).
- If a “habit cue” such as stress causes you to perform an unhealthy habit, train yourself to perform a healthy habit when you receive those habit cues as well (Layton).
- Remove unhealthy habit cues from your life if possible, even if it means ending a friendship or changing your living space.
- Break “habit cues” by changing your environment. The easiest way to change a habit is by doing so on vacation, because you are removed from the “habit cues” of your normal environment (Gross. Habits).

To learn more about habits, read “The Power of Habit” by Charles Duhigg, or B.F. Skinner's research work on “operant conditioning.” The remainder of this guide documents various 'triggers' as well as things that can help lower one's potential to experiencing depression. It is your job to experiment. What activities, foods, medicines, environments, thoughts, and nutrients make you feel better? Which don't? Apply the knowledge of habit formation and deformation to leading a better life. Good luck!

# Activities and Hobbies

Running, art, writing, traveling, music, collecting, potlucks, puzzles! Activities and hobbies are very important, largely because they are much of what life is about. Not only do they bring fulfillment and potentially connect you with new friends, activities and hobbies also help keep the brain from obsessing over negative thoughts. You can also try out new activities from the newspaper, classes, or online from websites like <[www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com)> or <[meetup.com](http://meetup.com)>. Activities that help others are especially fulfilling. Not only do they occupy your time with making a difference, they boost self-esteem and self-worth. All activities should be scheduled into a planner or to-do list so you feel more inclined to doing them, or set up dates with friends. Even if you feel socially withdrawn while depressed, my experience is that you will only feel better being around other people. Use this knowledge as a motivational tool to partake in social life. The following section documents some of the best activities and hobbies for coping with depression.

## Schedule Your Week



Being depressed can make getting things done very difficult. You might feel compelled to sleep all day or ignore and cancel plans you've made. Keeping a schedule can be effective in getting work done or staying on track to getting better. A schedule can take many forms. It can be a single piece of paper, a day to day planner book, or a calendar. I prefer a weekly planner, but you just have to

remember to check it every day! Make sure to cover activities for your personal health first, and then include time for other things like volunteering, media entertainment, and hosting events. Scheduling too much time for others, or too much in general, might create stress, hardship and make you forget to do things like exercise, sleep, and eat healthfully. Once you've completed a task, it's especially nice to cross it off as an accomplishment!

Another scheduling technique is creating a list of activities to do if you are feeling a certain way or something triggering happens. The Icarus Project (see the Resources section) calls this a "mad map." To create a mad map, write your "escalators," or negative emotions, and next to that your "de-escalators," or actions that make you feel better when sad, anxious, suicidal, and so on. Below that, list people you can call at any time to talk with. This should be put somewhere easily accessible so that you will read it when needed. You could also include a list of specific things that cause you stress and how you coped effectively with them in the past. See the end of this guide for an example.

## Meditation, Mindfulness, and Prayer



Regular meditation improves mood and prevents depression (Paula). It is mostly effective by giving the brain a rest from reiterating negative thoughts and feelings. There is no limit to what form meditation can take, but the primary goal is to focus on the present moment and not pass judgments on thoughts that may arise. In a silent environment, close your eyes and focus on the sensations your breathing create. Think 'in' with each inward breath and 'out' with each outward breath. You can also state a positive phrase or mantra for each inward and outward breath, or, focus your concentration on a candle's flame or other object. It can be very helpful to join a meditation group to help form a habit of meditating, or you can find guided meditations through podcasts online. Many books also exist with

guided meditations such as Thich Nhat Hanh's Joy of Meditation as Nourishment (Hahn). The following is a great example from this work:

### **Exercise One - Joy of Meditation as Nourishment**

1.

Breathing in, I calm my body.

Calm

Breathing out, I smile.

Smile

2.

Breathing in, I dwell in the present moment.

Present moment

Breathing out, I know it is a wonderful moment.

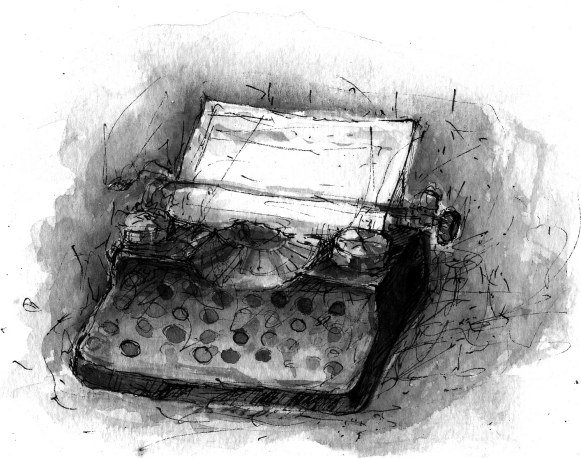
Wonderful moment

Start by stating the full phrase on the left. Feel these words with each inward and outward breath. With following breaths, focus on the simplified form of the phrase on the right. These words are not so much ideas to think of as they are reminders to maintain focus with the sensations of the present moment. Do step one for several minutes, or however long you feel like, and then go on to the next. Thoughts and judgments of the past, present, and future may arise, but let them flow past and return to your focus in the sensations of the present moment.

Another option is to practice mindfulness. Why can words, sounds, gestures, images and other stimuli cause depression and anxiety? It is because one elaborates over their meaning and obsesses over the stimuli in a negative way. Mindfulness is shutting off that elaboration and staying focused with one's immediate surroundings (Grohol). It is awareness of how one thinks and feels. Mindfulness meditation gradually "[increases] activity on the left side of the prefrontal cortex, which is associated with joyful and serene emotions" (Meditation). For example, your boss critiques your work because it did not meet their standards. Instead of obsessing over the critique with thoughts of worry, anxiety, and generally making yourself feel bad, focus on your breathing, a vase, the sunlight, a conversation, your work, your breathing, or generally any emotionally neutral stimuli. Do not follow negative thoughts into the past or the future. Take up the space used for making yourself feel bad with the details of your surroundings and day-to-day activities. Techniques to help learn mindfulness can be found at <http://www.mindful.org/mindfulness-practice>, the writings of Thich Nhat Hanh, and, the book How To Train A Wild Elephant & Other Adventures in Mindfulness.

To stay in the present, it can also be useful to make peace with the past.

Prayer, especially "prayers releasing hurts" and "prayers of blessings" on persons who have offended you can help improve mood (Boelens). This means taking time to forgive yourself for things you might blame or judge yourself for, and wishing well on and forgiving people who have in the past hurt you. While often associated with a religious or spiritual lifestyle, there is no reason why prayer cannot be practiced by a person with a secular worldview. This 'prayer' might even take the form of a mantra meditation, where a positive or insightful phrase is said with each inward and outward breath. Take some time right now to focus on moving onward and transforming negative memories into memories of growth and healing.

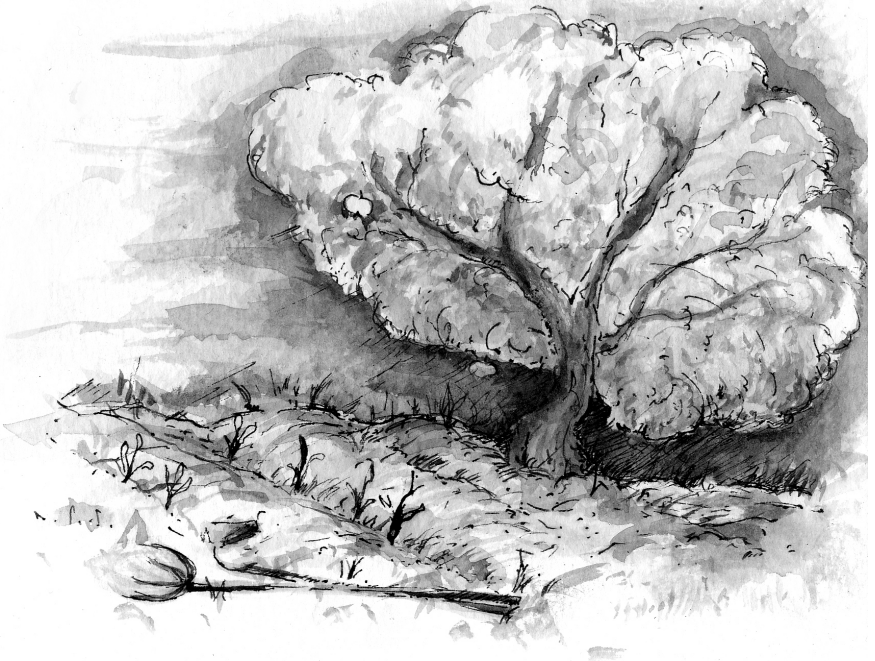


## Writing

Writing has been an effective tool for me when coping with depression. Putting words down on paper or an electronic document helps me process thoughts and stressful situations as well as record my life. It's nice to be able to look back and know my mental and physical accomplishments, or pick up on unhealthy situations and habits. Writing a thought or feeling also makes it stable and concrete, so that it does not have to be continuously repeated as it would be in my head. In this way a thought can be developed rather than dwelled upon. Part of fighting depression is in recognizing that you are depressed and how that influences your thoughts and feelings. The world experienced from a depressed state can appear starkly different. In this altered state, you may lash out at yourself or others, and often in ways that can hurt the "un-depressed you." By processing your thoughts and feelings, you can better understand their basis in reality and how to deal with them accordingly. Realize that your friends have no reason to dislike you, or that strangers are not judging you poorly. You could also write a list of positive affirmations and put it on your wall to read each morning when you wake up. Include things like, "I am strong," "I love myself," and, "The world is a

beautiful place.” Another idea is to write about happy memories from your past, or about who/what/ where you want to be in the future. Recalling the happiest moments of your life can be very uplifting and give you a sense of something that you might want to strive for in the future. Similarly, writing about your ideal future will give you ideas about things to change presently.

## Gardening, Farming, and Soil Bacteria



Gardening is one of the best ways to fight depression because it is a multifaceted approach. By gardening, you not only are feeling fulfilled meeting the essential human need for food and nurturing other lifeforms, you are getting sunlight (vitamin D), exercise, fresh air, and exposure to a bacteria called *Mycobacterium vaccae*. Research conducted by Dr. Christopher Lowry indicates that *Mycobacterium vaccae* is an antidepressant and prevents inflammatory disorders like asthma (Marano 57). Much more research is being done into *M. vaccae* and it potentially has other health benefits as well. Accordingly, Dr. Lowry has proposed the “hygiene hypothesis,” which states that many people today are sick because they are too clean and not getting outside enough. This makes sense, because our bodies rely on a symbiotic relationship with bacteria to function. In fact, for every human cell in our body, there are 10 microbial cells (Gross. Bacterial)! If we lack bacteria that our bodies have traditionally used to work, then

the natural consequence is that our bodies cannot function to their full capacity. Some of my friends even stopped needing to take their pharmaceutical antidepressants when they began working on an organic farm. This could have been caused by a number of factors, but it was still intriguing to hear. Farming has the added benefit of usually being removed from city stresses such as pollutants, cars, loud sounds, overwhelming stimuli, and, depending on where you live, ugly city aesthetic.

## Smile and Laugh!

Smiling is generally associated with expressing positive feelings and happiness (Lienhard). Even if you aren't feeling happy, try giving a genuine smile and you might at least have a small break from negative emotions. Also try putting yourself in a social situation where other people are around because smiling is usually a social cue and comes easier together with others (Ruiz-Belda). My experience is that I express positive emotions more strongly when others are expressing them with me. Movies, memes, music, and the like just seem better in groups.

When life is especially stressful, it's also nice to laugh. Although sometimes difficult, a stand-up comedy, funny book, quirky movie, or giggly friend can provide a certain entertainment that connects you to the idea that life can be happy. Happiness is a skill, and just like any skill, takes practice if you are not naturally talented with it.

## Make Art and Craft

Making art, or participating in art therapy sessions, can reduce depression, anxiety, and hopelessness (Judith; Hughs). With art you actively use your mind and body to stay present but also are able to self-analyze in a sort of meditative

way. You might also feel a self-esteem boost from having a physical relic of something you accomplished, or by receiving positive feedback for your completed artwork (if you are willing to share it). You don't just have to make stereotypical pieces of art like paintings either. Why not play music, make informational booklets, publish a community map of your favorite stores, crochet a rug, create a website, reupholster your couch, or build a strange table out of



recycled objects? The sky's the limit, unless you build a space shuttle!

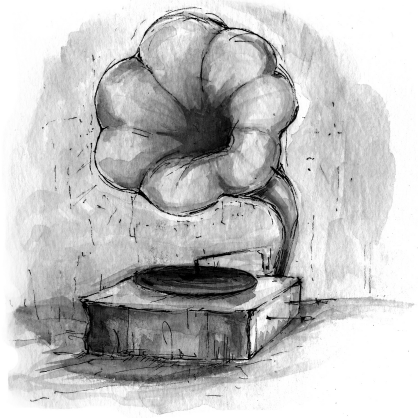
## Light Therapy

Light therapy uses high intensity lights to simulate sunlight and can prevent seasonal affective disorder (SAD). SAD is a type of depression generally experienced in places with limited sunlight during the winter time. Some evidence indicates that light therapy can also help prevent non-seasonal depression, especially with persons who are indoors most of the day (Young, “Bright”). Treatment times vary, but generally for the full effects to take place a session in front of a 10,000 lux light will last 30 minutes, and a session in front of a 2500 lux light will last 2 hours (Columbia). These lights can be purchased online.

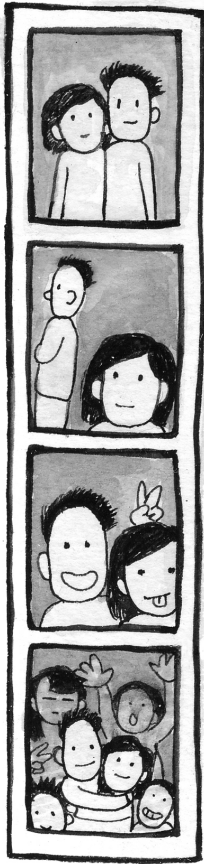
## Listen to Music and Background Noise

So long as the listener enjoys it, any type of music can improve one's mood (Kemper). Contrary to what some think, music stereotypically viewed as angry, such as death metal, is likely listened to as a symptom of depression rather than being the cause of a person's negative feelings (Scheel). That said, I have experienced listening to sad or angry music bring on or intensify anger, sadness, and depression. Just be mindful of how music impacts you, and make sure it does not become a means of completely avoiding emotions or the processing of thoughts. See the section “Staying In Tune With ‘Reality’” for more information.

Another option for your ears is natural sound. If you want to create a calming environment, or if noises from things like doors, voices, and trains stress you out or keep you awake, you can listen to soothing recorded background sounds like rain, wind, and ocean waves. Download any number of nature's noises online and put them on loop to play indefinitely, or just turn on a fan. There are also smart phone applications available with large sets of calming sounds to choose from.



## Friendships, Relationships, and Community



While depression and social withdrawal often go hand-in-hand, try to challenge yourself to go out with others. My experience is that even if I don't want to socialize, I feel better if I do. This may not be the case for everyone, but we, as humans, are social creatures who thrive off of one another. Friends provide support for when you're feeling down, share happy moments, and can motivate you to do activities. Making friends is an art that anyone can become good at, but it takes practice. Learn what works and what doesn't when communicating with a new person. If making friends is difficult, you might need to consider your personality and change it. Be sure to always assert your needs to maintain your mental health though, even if it means ending a friendship. This process is an opportunity for personal growth. Know that friendship is two sided, and both sides must provide something that the other needs such as social contact, shared interests, food, and so forth. Both sides must also have the time to take on a new friend; though people can stay acquaintances for years and then develop a close friendship, so it's still worth it to try. No matter what your problems are or what interests you have, someone will share them. It's just a matter of figuring out who!

Friendship can also develop romantically into a relationship. Relationships should never be sought out as a coping mechanism, but only as a point of mutual love. With that bond, you are given purpose and a person to feel safe around, but the emotions often come in extremes. You will almost definitely experience extreme happiness and extreme sorrow at some point. Even with those extremes in mind, sharing love is worth a lot in life. Of course, you don't need to engage in a relationship to express or feel love; it can just help.

If your current living situation is isolating, consider developing friendships online, renting a house with others, getting a pet, or joining a community. Community living and renting a house with others is great in that it takes a lot of pressure off of meeting people, makes finding social events easier, lowers individual expenses, and gives a lot of meaning to one's life. Check out the National Association of Student Cooperatives <nasco.coop> and the

International Communities Directory <<http://directory.ic.org>> for community resources and information. Pet cats and dogs can also help with one's social life because they make fairly forgiving friends and are easy to get along with. That is, so long as you take care of them properly. They can also help one learn about compassionate behavior, an essential skill with human friends. Lastly, friends can be made online through blogs, forums, and games. Just put yourself out there; it's the one criteria for any friendship to occur!

## **Sex, Masturbation, and Pornography**

Sex<sup>A</sup> and masturbation both have similar effects on the body by releasing the happy chemicals of serotonin and dopamine<sup>B</sup>. (Sperm). On the one hand, sex has the perks of creating great happiness, validating your physical qualities, and potentially bonds you more strongly to a person you love. On the other, sex comes with risks such as pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and other emotionally difficult things like jealousy. Because it can deeply hurt you and the person involved, sex should never be sought out as a coping mechanism for depression. It can, however, be nice as part of a relationship or connecting with someone.

Masturbation is a much safer avenue to orgasmic pleasure than sex because it is disease and pregnancy free. The only thought that must be given to masturbation is the use of pornography as a masturbatory tool. Pornography can be part of a healthy masturbatory experience if consumed with full consciousness of what you are seeing, though that can be difficult. Mainstream porn has the tendency to promote unrealistic gender and sexual roles and rarely represents how real sexual encounters occur. Dependency is also frequently a problem for depressed folks, and many people find themselves not just using porn, but needing to. Dependency on porn, or other intense sensations, can interfere with daily tasks, create social anxiety, or induce unhealthy thinking about yourself or others. If you think your porn use meet these criteria it might be a good idea to put the porn away and work on exploring your body without masturbation aids (or with different ones). There are also alternatives to mainstream porn, such as “feminist porn,” which promote healthier views on sex and the people involved.

---

A Safe and consensual only please!

B One of the neurotransmitters thought to be connected to feeling happy.

# Taking Care of Your Mind and Body:

## Food, Nutrients, Sleep, Exercise, and Pregnancy

Your mind and body are one. Chemicals from the brain direct the body, and what we do to and put into our bodies alter the chemical composition of the brain. Chemicals such as serotonin, dopamine, norepinephrine, and others have a huge impact on mood! We can alter many of these chemical levels with how we treat ourselves through eating, exercising, sleeping, and taking supplements and medicines.



### Food

Poor diet has been linked to depression and anxiety (Poor). For me, eating a certain way definitely affects my mood within a short period of time. If I eat a lot of something like bread or sugar, I will have no desire to be around people because I feel agitated and awful. Poor diet is the result of both not consuming the right foods and consuming the wrong foods. Depending on your body type and ethnicity, you may need a slightly different diet than others, but there are general

guidelines to eating well. Be sure that you are getting a wide assortment of both cooked and raw whole foods with a variety of colors spread throughout the day. If this is difficult to afford, try growing vegetables in a garden or pots. Avoid heavily processed foods which lack nutrients such as chips and candy, and, if possible, eat from local and organic farms you know are not putting toxins on their produce. Some foods such as lima beans are healthy but bind nutrients and must not be eaten all the time. There is a lot of information and misinformation about diet so check sources and keep biases in mind. You may want to see a nutritionist to help you figure out if you're missing anything or need help creating a wholesome diet. You can also create a nutrient profile for yourself through recording information from food labels and going to websites like The World's Healthiest Foods <<http://www.whfoods.com/foodstoc.php>> and Self Nutrition Data <<http://nutritiondata.self.com>>.

Along with eating nutritious foods, you might also consult a nutritionist about going on an exclusion diet to see how different foods allergically affect you. Many physical and mental conditions may be caused by reactions to certain foods, even if you have eaten those foods for your whole life. My friends and I have seen altering the way we eat affect our skin conditions, anxiety, and energy levels. Going on an exclusion diet means removing a common allergen such as wheat, dairy, corn, and soy from your diet and replacing it with a typically less allergenic substitute such as quinoa, rice, and almond milk. Avoid consuming processed foods during this time because many may be packaged in the same facility as or contain derivatives of a food you are avoiding. After several weeks without the commonly allergenic food, note any changes you experienced and see how you react to eating the food again; if your mood/symptoms are the same your nutritionist may recommend repeating this process with another allergen. The results can be very surprising! See the "Allergy Exclusion Diet" page on WHFoods.org for more information.

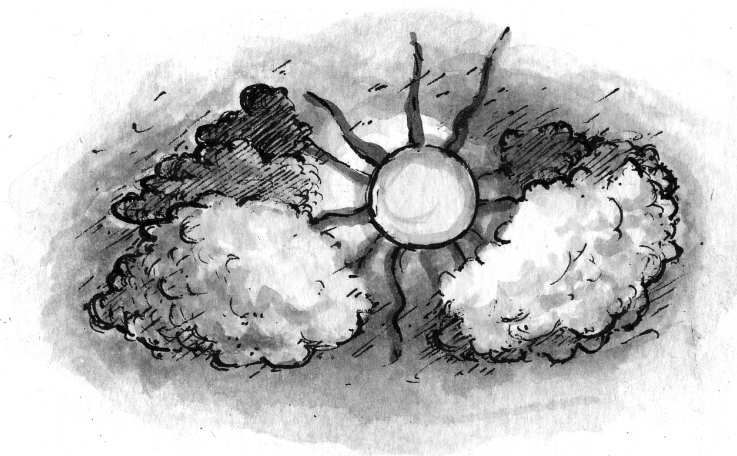
## Nutrients

Depression is a common symptom of nutrient deficiency (Davison K Michelle). In one study, most subjects diagnosed with bipolar or severe depression were found to lack fiber,  $\alpha$ -linolenic (omega-3 fatty acid) and linoleic acid (omega-6 fatty acid), the B vitamins including thiamin (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), niacin (vitamin B3), pantothenic acid (vitamin B5), vitamin B6 (pyridoxine), folate (vitamin B9), and vitamin B12, vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron, phosphorus, and zinc. Nearly all of these vitamins and minerals are well established in maintaining healthy brain function. Other

nutrients which play a role in mood and depression include vitamin D and selenium (see below).

In the United States most people base their nutrient intake on recommended daily allowances (RDAs). The RDAs seen on food packaging are the recommended minimum nutrient intake of vitamins and minerals to be healthy, so you can take more of most nutrients without undesired side effects. It is rare to get too much of a nutrient eating whole foods, but if you begin taking supplements, just be sure to follow the serving sizes and directions to prevent overdosing.

Any nutrient deficiency can cause problems, so you might consider having a medical professional test your nutrient levels to know where you need to fortify it. They may instruct you to supplement with a multivitamin or eat more of certain foods. A wholesome diet with lots of variety should get you most of the nutrients you need to be healthy, but food and how each individual's body processes it is complex, so deficiencies may still arise. Furthermore, nutrients from fruit and vegetables are dependent upon the soil they were grown in. **A deficiency in the soil means a deficiency in the food grown.** Know your local farmer and make sure that they feed their soil well. It's for your health!



### **-Vitamin D, Sunlight, and the Outdoors**

A low level of vitamin D is often associated with seasonal affective disorder (SAD). SAD is a form of depression caused when a person does not get enough vitamin D, often during the winter months. A person can become vitamin D deficient any time of the year by not getting outside enough, or by wearing too

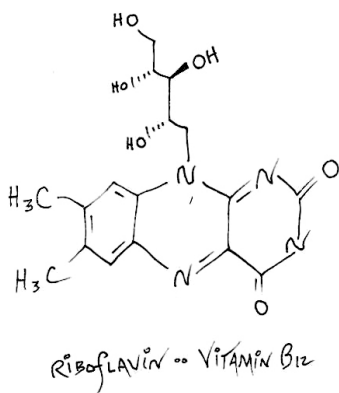
much sunscreen or clothing. Skin color also affects the body's uptake of vitamin D with lighter skinned people absorbing more. The Office of Dietary Supplements recommends exposure to the outside for 5-30 minutes at least twice per week to absorb enough of the nutrient when sunlight is available, and for people with darker skin to supplement when there is little sunlight (Dietary). Vitamin D does store up in the body, so it is possible with enough fall, spring, and summer sun exposure to last through a cloudy or shut-in winter, but more than likely you will have to supplement.

Vitamin D is actually a hormone that exists in two forms, D2 and D3 (Crowther). In food D2 comes from plants like sunflower seeds, leafy greens, avocados, and carrots, and D3 comes from animal sources like mackerel, herring, salmon, liver, and lanolin (sheep's wool oil is often used as a D3 supplement). D3 is the same molecule synthesized when skin is exposed to sunlight. Because D2 must become D3 in the body, D2 is only utilized by the body one-third as well as D3 (Laura). To supplement, you can buy liquid drops, pills, or get a shot. You can also take fish oil, which includes another antidepressant, omega-3 fatty acids.

### -Omega-3 and Omega-6 Fatty Acids

Maintaining a one-to-one ratio of omega-3 fatty acids to omega-6 fatty acids can greatly improve one's health by reducing the risk of "cardiovascular disease, cancer, and inflammatory and autoimmune diseases." (Simopoulos). This ratio may also aid in preventing depression, though several studies report contrasting findings (Logan). The important thing to consider though is that most people in the United States get far too much omega-6 fatty acids which come from things like corn oil, safflower oil, sunflower oil, and canola oil (World's. omega-3 fatty acids). Sources of omega-3 fatty acids include flax seed,

fish, walnuts, and soybeans (World's. omega). It is heat sensitive, so you must eat foods containing omega-3 fatty acids raw and use oils containing them that are cold-pressed. It is also better absorbed in whole foods rather than in a supplemental form.



### -B Vitamins

Deficiency of B Vitamins, especially vitamin B12 and vitamin B9 (folate), is associated with depression (Willamson). B12 only reliably comes from animal

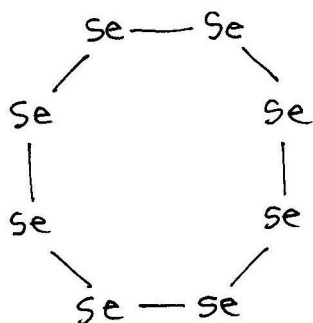
products, but many foods such as the vegan-loved nutritional yeast are generally supplemented with it. Sources of B12 include liver, fish, beef, lamb, yogurt, and eggs (World's. vitamin B12). Many people are B12 deficient even if they eat meat, because B12 “slowly loses its activity when exposed to light, oxygen and acid or alkali-containing environments...” and is lost in water or meat juices during cooking due to its water solubility (Vitamin). Vitamin B9, also known as folic acid, or folate, comes from “romaine lettuce, spinach, asparagus, turnip greens, mustard greens, calf’s liver, parsley, collard greens, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, and lentils” (World's. folate).

### -Zinc

A deficiency in zinc can cause depression, so ensuring you are taking adequate levels is important (Levenson). Preliminary studies have shown an increased antidepressant effect by combining zinc supplementation with pharmaceutical antidepressants. Zinc has also been used alone to treat depression and mania (Davison, Karen M.). Good sources of zinc include meat, seeds, legumes, oats, and yogurt (World's. Zinc).

### -Selenium

Fortifying your selenium intake can improve mood (Benton). Depending on the soil quality, selenium may or may not be in foods like meat, fish, eggs, Brazil nuts, mushrooms, and mustard seeds (World's. Selenium).



SELENIUM

### -Calcium

Too much or too little calcium can cause depression (Arasteh). Too little calcium limits normal brain function and absorption of vitamin D, while too much disrupts magnesium absorption, another mineral which helps prevent depression (Harrison). The balance involves consuming roughly equal or more amounts of magnesium than the RDA of calcium. Calcium is naturally found in dairy products, tofu, sesame seeds, collard greens, as well as spinach (World's. calcium). Most non-dairy milks are calcium fortified as well.

## -Nutrient Table

\*Please read the previous notes in conjunction with this list.

Nutrient:	Sources:
Vitamin B1 (thiamine), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) (Gardiner).	Liver, fish, dairy, chicken, potatoes, beans, dark leafy greens (American), wheat bran (Busch)
Vitamin B9 (folate)	“Romaine lettuce, spinach, asparagus, turnip greens, mustard greens, calf's liver, parsley, collard greens, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, and lentils” (World's. folate)
Vitamin B12	Liver, fish, beef, lamb, yogurt, eggs, nutritional yeast (World's vitamin B12)
Vitamin C (Zhang)	Peppers, strawberries, broccoli, pineapple, brussels sprouts, kiwifruit, oranges, kale (World's. vitamin C)
Calcium	Dairy products, tofu, sesame seeds, collard greens, spinach (World's. calcium)
Vitamin D2 (from plant sources)	Sunflower seeds, leafy greens, avocados, carrots (Crowther)
Vitamin D3 (from animal sources and sunlight)	Sunlight, mackerel, herring, salmon, liver (Crowther)
Iron (Davison K Michelle)	Beans, spinach, liver, venison, sesame seeds, olives (World's Iron)
Magnesium (Arnstein)	Spinach, chard, soybeans, sesame seeds, black beans, quinoa, sunflower seeds, cashews (World's. magnesium)

Phosphorus (Davison K Michelle)	Meat, eggs, dairy products, nuts, legumes, whole grains, potatoes, garlic (Phosphorus)
Potassium (Davison K Michelle)	Swiss chard, bananas, potatoes, yams, spinach, beans (World's. Potassium)
Omega-3 Fatty Acid	Flax seed, fish, walnuts, and soybeans (World's. omega)
Selenium	Meat, fish, eggs, Brazil nuts, mushrooms, and mustard seeds (World's. selenium)
Zinc	Meat, seeds, legumes, oats, yogurt (World's. zinc)

## What To Avoid

Note that there are no absolutes to how any individual will react to a substance. Decreasing or removing the following items from one's diet might lower the chance of experiencing depression for some, but may have no impact on others. As stated previously, just be mindful of how they make you feel after consuming them, or, consider excluding them from your diet for a period of time.

### -Sugar

Refined sugar may cause or increase the risk of depression in some persons, especially women with lactose intolerance (Deans). Regular consumption of sugar also reduces the effectiveness of receptors tied to producing serotonin (Darakhshan 5). Everything has sugar in it, but the point is to avoid concentrated sugars such as in candy, sweet baked goods, soda, and some processed foods. This is especially important with the growing epidemic of type 2 diabetes, a completely preventable disease. So, say no to processed sweets and yes to wholesome fruits to get your sugar fix!

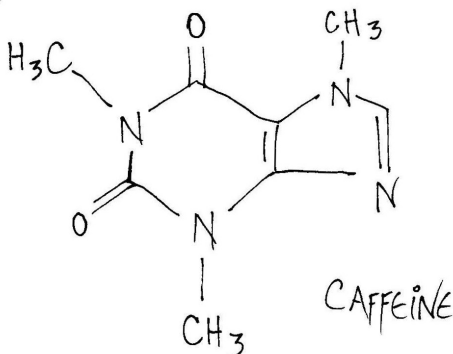


## -Cigarettes and Coffee(?)

In one study the use of cigarettes and coffee were related to an increased chance of suicide in bipolar disorder patients (Ross). Nicotine is also associated with causing episodes of schizophrenia in people who are predisposed to the condition, so it might be something that you choose to avoid (Coulston). Then again, smoking is a way to socialize and get outside, but with drawbacks to your health. Consider finding alternative means of getting these benefits in your day to day life.

## -Caffeine

Research shows an uncertain effect of caffeine on depression and anxiety. On one hand many studies have found that drinking a few cups of coffee a day improves one's mood (Smith, Andrew P.). However, further studies on the direct chemical effect of caffeine reveal some troubling findings. First, long term intake of the stimulant has been associated with a decrease in serotonin available for the body to use, even though serotonin levels increase (B.S. Gupta 21). For people taking pharmaceutical drugs, caffeine also interacts with some of the same receptors and may prevent the drugs from taking their full effect (Carrillo). Lastly, irregular consumption of caffeine can induce anxiety, such as only drinking a cup of coffee every couple of days (Childs E). Common things containing caffeine include coffee, soda pop, tea, chocolate, and yerba mate. See the section on sleep deterrents if you need an alternative to waking up, or simply consume beverages with less caffeine such as green tea.



## -Marijuana

In a comparison of studies, research showed that for some people medical marijuana can reduce or stop symptoms of depression and anxiety, while for others medical marijuana makes depression worse (procon.org). Many peer-reviewed studies associate heavy marijuana use

with causing depression and anxiety (Degenhardt). Heavy use of marijuana can also increase the chance of experiencing psychosis or having a schizophrenic episode (Cohen).

### **-Alcohol**

The potion of social lubrication, alcohol, unfortunately has some downsides beyond hangovers and blackouts. Increased levels of alcohol consumption causes heightened levels of depression when sober (Gail). Drinking is also not suggested when taking some medications due to a change in how the substances interact with the mind and body. In practice it is difficult to avoid alcohol in some social circles and can be very helpful for gaining the courage to meet new people and make friends. If completely giving up alcohol isn't for you, the best thing to do is to limit your consumption and be aware that symptoms of depression after sobering up may be the effect of alcohol. Another option is to find alternative ways to be comfortable in social situations, such as with deep breathing, keeping busy preparing food, or playing a game. Like most other mind-altering substances, consuming alcohol to avoid emotions and thoughts is not healthy and will not help with getting better.



### **-Pollutants**

Some people experience chemical sensitivity and adverse effects from the toxins found in nearly all consumer products, the air, and foods. In one study, workers moved from a conventional office building into a 'green' office building

built with natural materials and better natural lighting. The business experienced increased productivity as fewer people were absent due to depression, asthma, stress, and respiratory allergies (S Korkmaz). Mold and dampness can cause depression as well, so if your home has these problems, consider using a dehumidifier (M Brown). Keeping a window open to filter in fresh air will also help decrease a buildup of pollutants and disease-causing pathogens (Jessica). Be conscientious of the paints you use, your shampoo ingredients, clothing you wear, and materials in your house like insulation. There are a number of plants that can filter out airborne pollutants within a living space. According to NASA, the following list is comprised of the best plants for filtering air pollutants (Richard).

### **Best Air-Filtering Plants**

- English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)
- Spider plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*)
- Golden pothos or devil's ivy (*Scindapsus aureus* or *Epipremnum aureum*)
- Peace lily (*Spathiphyllum 'Mauna Loa'*)
- Chinese evergreen (*Aglaonema modestum*)
- Bamboo palm or reed palm (*Chamaedorea sefrizii*)
- Snake plant or mother-in-law's tongue (*Sansevieria trifasciata 'Laurentii'*)
- Heartleaf philodendron (*Philodendron oxycardium*, syn. *Philodendron cordatum*)
- Selloum philodendron (*Philodendron bipinnatifidum*, syn. *Philodendron selloum*)
- Elephant ear philodendron (*Philodendron domesticum*)
- Red-edged dracaena (*Dracaena marginata*)
- Cornstalk dracaena (*Dracaena fragans 'Massangeana'*)
- Janet Craig dracaena (*Dracaena deremensis 'Janet Craig'*)
- Warneck dracaena (*Dracaena deremensis 'Warneckii'*)
- Weeping Fig (*Ficus benjamina*)
- Gerbera Daisy or Barberton daisy (*Gerbera jamesonii*)
- Pot Mum or Florist's Chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*)
- Rubber Plant (*Ficus elastica*).

Many of these are common household plants and can be found at your local plant nursery. Another option is getting out of the city and moving to the country.

## Sleeping and Awakening

When you're depressed it's easy to obsess over a negative thought and not be able to sleep, but in turn it can make you irritated and less rational the following day, so try to get enough sleep. There is no exact amount of sleep any one person needs, although too much or too little sleep is associated with severe health problems (How Much). Adults should sleep 7-9 hours per day, teenagers 8.5-9.25 hours per day, and 5-10 year-olds 10-11 hours per day. The following are ways to help sleep and wake up.



### -Sleep Aids

- Take a natural sleep aid such as chamomile, melatonin, or valerian.
- Avoid viewing electronic media within a few hours before sleep. The screen interacts with your brain in such a way that it makes your sleep less restful as well as making it more difficult to fall asleep (Trapani).
- Exercising in the morning or midday helps with falling asleep later, but don't exercise at night as it will instead make sleep harder (Trapani).
- Foods such as turkey, warm milk, bananas, potatoes, oatmeal, and whole-wheat bread are known to help induce sleep (Trapani).
- Make sleeping a routine with brushing your teeth, flossing, changing into pajamas, and maybe a small activity as part of it. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, and only use your bed for sleeping and sex, not working in. By using a routine like this, your body will know it is time to sleep (Smith, Melinda).
- Only nap earlier in your day and keep naps to below 30 minutes (Smith, Melinda).
- Expose yourself only to dim light when you're ready for bed to allow the

level of melatonin, the natural sleep hormone, to increase and tell the body it is time to sleep (Smith, Melinda).

- Make your bedroom a comfortable space by eliminating noises, keeping it dark, and maintaining a temperature of 65 degrees Fahrenheit or below (Smith, Melinda).
- Avoid putting disturbing or stressful things in your mental scope such as horror movies. At least for myself, these stimuli increase the chance that I have nightmares and diminish my quality of sleep. Not only that, but also once experienced, they stay with you for the rest of your life. Think about what you want your memories to be composed of.
- Don't eat big meals, drink liquids to excess, or consume alcohol late at night. Smoking at all or drinking caffeine a few hours past when you wake up.
- both make it harder to sleep and diminish your quality of sleep as well (Smith, Melinda).
- Stress can prevent you from sleeping (Smith, Melinda). Sometimes when I can't sleep or am obsessing over a thought, going into a state of meditation and only focusing on deep breathing helps me fall asleep.
- If you wake up in the middle of the night, worrying about being able to fall back asleep will only keep you awake (Smith, Melinda). Try to relax thoughtlessly.



- If you can't fall asleep or are woken up and can't fall back asleep, do a small activity out of bed such as reading under a dim light and try again later.
- Listen to soothing recorded background sounds like rain, wind, and ocean waves to help mask or block out noises that keep you awake. You can find noise generating applications online. You can also turn on a fan, or just wear earplugs if they aren't too uncomfortable for your ears.

### **-Sleep Deterrents**

- Eat foods that contain protein and fat along with carbohydrates and sugar. Eating fruit or carbohydrates like bread alone will increase your energy short term and then create a sugar crash, causing tiredness (Newitz).
- If you use an alarm clock, set it away from your bed so you have to get up to turn it off.
- Expose yourself to lots of light, preferably direct sunlight, in the morning to lower levels of the natural sleep hormone, melatonin (Smith, Melinda).
- Drink tea or coffee.
- Shower in the morning instead of at night.
- Eat a more complete diet.
- Get into a habit of stretching and lightly exercising right after you get up.

### **Exercise**

According to Dr. Mike Evans, exercise decreases the severity of depression by thirty to fifty percent (Evans). Thirty minutes to an hour a day of activities like walking, swimming, or weight lifting can do more than prevent depression, they reduce pain in knee arthritis and the chance of hip fracture in postmenopausal women, reduce the progression into dementia and Alzheimer's, and reduce the risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, death, and anxiety. Exercise is also the number one treatment for fatigue, and in



general improves one's quality of life. Thus, exercise may also relieve or stop depression associated with existing health problems. Change activities if you begin experiencing pain, but even if you feel fatigued all the time, exercise will only make your body stronger.

If you have trouble motivating yourself to exercise, get a friend to go with you. Another option is becoming a dog owner to create a sense of obligation to get them outside. Pets also make great friends!

## **Pregnancy and Preventing Your Child From Developing Depression**

If pregnant, check with your doctor before taking any medications or herbal supplements. Some medication usage just requires closer monitoring by a medical professional, but others, like most antidepressants, should not be taken at all. In the latter case, you'll have to seek alternatives to pharmaceuticals to deal with your depression. Many mothers also experience postpartum depression upon giving birth. While no scientific research has been completed regarding it, some believe that consuming the placenta (placentophagy) after giving birth will help prevent this type of depression, as well as having a number of other benefits (Donovan). Postpartum depression can also be dealt with by using coping mechanisms outlined throughout this guide.

Once you are pregnant, how can you lower the risk of depression in your child? It begins before birth, in the womb (Ryrie 23). Mothers who eat a proper diet are much more likely to give birth on time and to a baby with a healthy weight, two factors linked to youth happiness and better cognitive ability later in life. Breast milk has an important balance of essential fatty acids linked to proper brain development, so once born the baby should be breastfed as well. Keep in mind that anything consumed, including medicines, will be present in your breast milk. Once older, a healthy diet for your child is essential in maintaining their mood and behavior. Please see the eating section earlier in the booklet for general information on a healthy diet. Keep in mind though that children and pregnant persons have different nutritional requirements than others, so if possible, you should do your research before caring for a child or becoming pregnant! See a prenatal fact sheet at <http://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/prenatal-care.cfm> for more information.

# Medicines for Depression and Anxiety

Reminder: I am not a medical professional. If you decide to use one of these substances prior to consulting with a medical professional, you do so at your own risk.



Pharmaceutical, psychedelic, and herbal medicines have been found to help relieve depression in users. Only an overview of taking pharmaceuticals is given in this booklet, as a medical health professional should prescribe you the proper type and dosage for your needs. Herbal medicines for anxiety and depression include St. John's Wort, 5-HTP, marijuana, lavender, valerian, and saffron. Although some are generally known to be safe, medical advice from an herbalist should be sought before regularly taking any herb in high doses. What

I've included is an overview that will enable you to do further research. Due to the illegality of psychedelics, only preliminary research from doctors given special government approval is available. Recent research has included studies on LSD, ketamine (cat tranquilizers), psilocybin (magic mushrooms), and ecstasy.

## Pharmaceuticals and Doctor Prescribed Drugs

Pharmaceutical antidepressants can help those with severe depression. If prescribed antidepressants, be sure you take them! There are adverse side-effects to stopping suddenly, such as heightened levels of depression. Also do not expect results immediately; it can take four or more weeks to feel any emotional changes from a new pharmaceutical antidepressant.

Pharmaceutical antidepressants can cause a number of wide-ranging side-effects as well. If you feel like the trade-offs are too much, become more depressed, or think of suicide, talk to your doctor. They may suggest a different medication, pair your current medication with another, or try a completely different method of controlling your depression. Switching medications can be very difficult emotionally, so be sure to have a solid support network to help you through your transition. If you want to get off your medication(s), talk to your doctor first to set up a schedule to slowly reduce your dosage.



## Herbal Medicines

### -St. John's Wort

According to a book review of St. John's Wort and Its Active Principles in Depression and Anxiety by the British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology, St. John's Wort is an effective antidepressant (Szabadi). It, however, cannot treat cases of severe depression (Carpenter). It is an herb, but it is also a potent medicine, and **must not be mixed with other medicines** such as

"certain classes of immunosuppressants, antivirals, anticoagulants and oral contraceptives..." (Szabadi). Take note as well that it lessens the efficacy of other drugs, thus limiting who can use it (Dwyer). It is suggested that, like any antidepressant, you ask a medical professional before use, especially if

transitioning from another antidepressant. One side effect of taking St. John's Wort is becoming more sensitive to sunlight, so be sure to cover up!

### **-5-HTP**

5-HTP is a precursor to serotonin and is derived from the African plant, *Griffonia simplicifolia* (Griffonia). There is very little research complete and no long term studies. Short term studies indicate 5-HTP is more effective than placebo controls in elevating mood (Shaw). My personal experience has been positive, but I have always taken it in conjunction with Vitamin D3. It is available online and through health food stores.



### **-Valerian**

Valerian, an herb, helps with anxiety and is a sedative for those having trouble sleeping (Head 9-10). Numerous studies show that, in comparison to pharmaceutical equivalents, there are fewer side effects too.

### **-Lavender**

Researchers found that lavender petal tea and extract helps lessen symptoms of depression (Dwyer).

### **-Ginseng**

Ginseng is a plant whose root is used for a number of purposes. Some species of ginseng, including *Panax* (Korean ginseng), *Eleutherococcus senticosus* (Siberian ginseng), and *Withania somnifera* (Indian ginseng), have been documented in lowering stress levels (Head).

### **-Saffron**

Saffron Crocus is a flower that is grown in many parts of the world to make saffron spice from the stigma (Crocus). In one study comparing the antidepressants Prozac and Imipramine to saffron, saffron was more effective and tolerable (Dwyer). The petals seem to have similar anti-depressant qualities to the

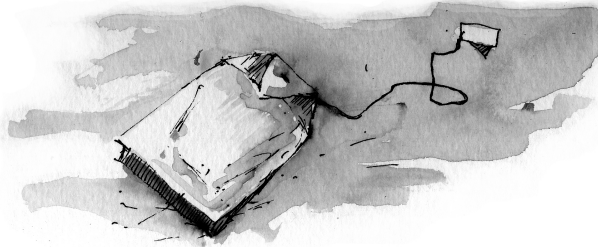
stigma and may help make saffron a cost-effective option in the future. Until then, you could grow your own and dry them.

### **-Golden Root**

Small studies of the plant *Rhodiola rosea*, or golden root, have shown taking extracts of the plant cause a reduction in anxiety and mental fatigue and improvement in sleep quality (Head).

### **-L-Theanine (Tea)**

Extracted from green and black teas, L-Theanine has been shown to lower anxiety without a sedative effect (Head). A cup of tea contains about 20 milligrams of L-Theanine, but the studies cited used much more concentrated extracts of the pure chemical.



### **-Coffee(?)**

As mentioned earlier in the section, 'What To Avoid', many studies show that coffee improves mood, but it creates a dependency and might cause anxiousness for some (Smith, Andrew P.).

### **-Marijuana(?)**

As mentioned previously in the 'What to Avoid' section, marijuana can cause depression, anxiety, and even schizophrenia for some, but helps reduce depressive symptoms for others. Using marijuana on a case by case basis when depressive flare ups occur may have a more positive role in preventing depression. Specific cultivars of marijuana may also differ in their psychological effects upon an individual. Of course, marijuana is still considered illegal by the federal government and most state governments, and depression is not a condition covered under current medical marijuana prescriptions.

## -Other Herbs for Anxiety and Sleeping

For lacking solid research regarding them and for some having dangerous side-effects, I won't go into detail about more herbs, but many others exist that have some amount of evidence in reducing anxiety and working as sleep aids. These include brahmi (*Bacopa monniera*), gotu kola (*Centella asiatica*), rain-of-gold (*Galphimia glauca*), German chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*), lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*), passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*), kava kava (*Piper methysticum*), hops (*Humulus lupulus*), blue skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*), and jujabe (*Ziziphus jujuba*) (Head 125). Several of these compare in effectiveness evenly with pharmaceutical equivalents, but with fewer side effects. Some are also toxic if taken over long periods of time or at high doses, so again, it's important to do your research or consult a medical professional.



## Psychedelics

Researchers have found that small doses of psychedelics such as LSD, ketamine (cat tranquilizers), and psilocybin ('magic' mushrooms) reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety, and obsessive compulsive disorder for months after use (Brauser). The idea is that patients are given a new perspective to look through and may thereby find a way around their typical negative mood (Cloud). Unfortunately these substances are illegal according to federal law and need further testing before they are accepted by the medical community. Read more personal accounts and safety issues at <<http://www.erowid.org>>.

## **Ecstasy/MDMA**

Past research (2004) indicates that the effects of Ecstasy/MDMA are negative, associating it with depression and delayed cognitive abilities (C. Stough). However, more recent research (2012) that utilized better control techniques found that MDMA usage does not have long term residual effects (Szalavitz). In fact, after two or three MDMA aided therapy sessions, seventeen out of twenty patients suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) no longer showed symptoms associated with PTSD. Some have high hopes for MDMA-based therapy aiding in marriage counseling, PTSD, depression, schizophrenia, and more, though like most mind-altering drugs, MDMA is considered illegal by the federal government.

# Thoughts for Change

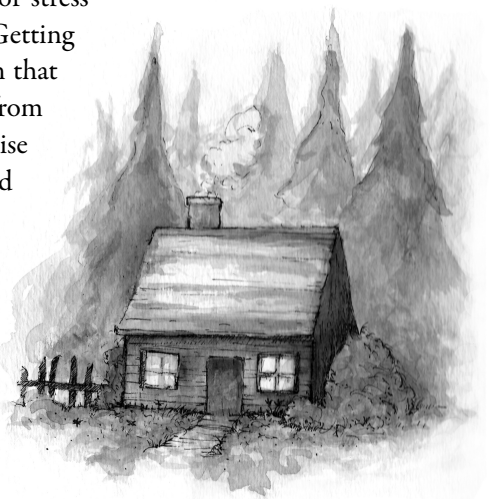
Therapy, Media, Self-Acceptance, Meaning and Purpose,  
Belief Covers, Trauma, For Teenagers, and Activism.

## Maintain A Positive Environment

Our environments greatly reflect our thoughts and feelings. Perhaps one of the most important preventative measures for depression is making sure that you remove yourself from perpetually stressful or negative situations that you cannot confront or change. These might include a work environment or living situation. Creating huge changes can be difficult, but giving yourself the chance to be happy and comfortable is an essential baseline. You needn't see this as 'running away' or 'giving up,' but rather as a healthy life decision. A negative space can be debilitating and make change impossible.

Another option is to alter your daily routine by spending time in a different environment or doing something nice for yourself. Go to a friend's house, a park, a cafe, the farmers market, or the woods. Even if you can't get out, do something enjoyable like taking a hot bath, making a cup of tea, or meditating to cheer up. For me, changing my routine greatly relieves the stress built up by nit-picking the normal environments I engage in. Especially when I sleep in a different place, it makes me realize that the world is much bigger than my normal scope of perception and my causes of stress suddenly become less important. Getting out to nature is especially relieving in that it is almost completely removed from humanity and city stresses such as noise and pollution. The complexity and beauty of tree's bark or ocean's waves also create an environment which can induce a calming state.

Lastly, you can organize and decorate your living and working spaces in such a way that it enhances your mood. If messes or difficulty finding things stress you out, clean up. You can also create



an environment with colors, pictures, light, labels, order, and sounds that you find pleasing. In the end though, if an environment doesn't have the right feel, such as lacking an appropriate amount of natural light, you should consider moving. For more ideas on making your space pleasant, read books on feng shui, interior design, and check out <<http://unfuckyourhabitat.tumblr.com/>>.

## **Therapy with Friends and Family, Professionals, Support Groups, and Pets**

### **-Friends and Family**

Have people in your life that you can talk to about your depression. Even if you don't feel like socializing, forcing yourself to be around people you know you enjoy can knock you out of a depressed state. More people than you think can relate to how you're feeling and assure you the world is not falling apart. Keeping it bottled up will only make matters worse. Be careful though with how much you ask of one person; it can be difficult for them as well, so spread out your friend base.

### **-Therapists**

Professional therapists are trained to help you get to the root of your psychological difficulties, analyze why you are depressed, and to confront those causes either past or present. Although often expensive, some do have sliding scale fees for those with low income. Every therapist is different, so if one doesn't work for you, another might. There are also many different types of therapists, some of which specialize in specific psychological conditions. A few types of therapy used for depressed persons include psychoanalysis, psychodynamic therapy, cognitive therapy, behavior therapy, interpersonal therapy, experiential therapy, and online therapy. Ask your doctor to find what type would be best for your needs.

### **-Support Groups**

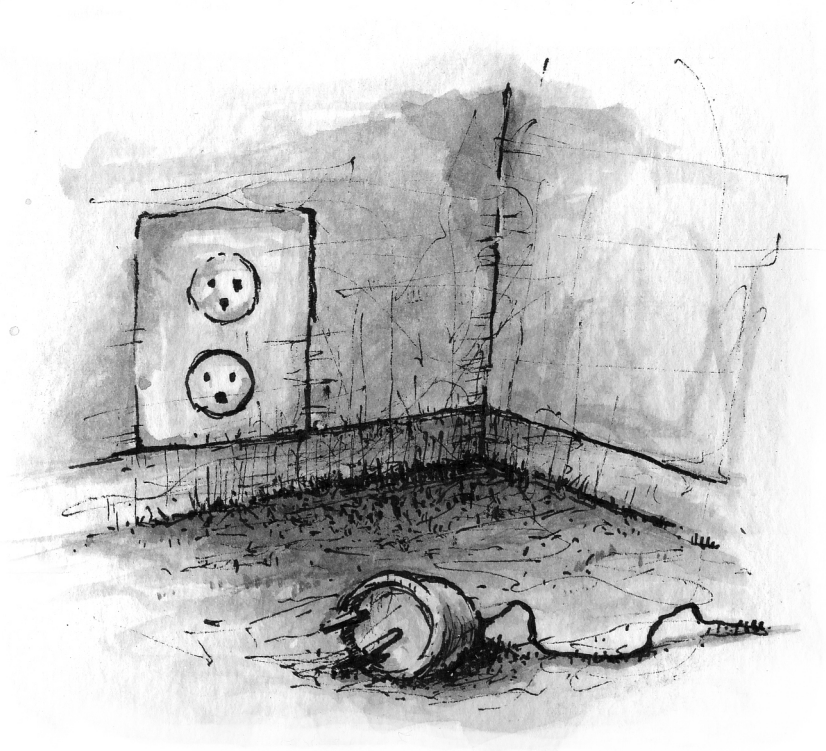
Support groups can greatly relieve stress and depression, especially when caused by physical ailments such as cancer or illness (U Koc). Interacting with someone else who has been through the same difficulties as you makes the act of speaking openly about your symptoms, past, and emotions much easier. Many support groups exist, and if they don't in your area you could start your own, or find ones that fit your needs online at sites like <[http://psychcentral.com/resources/Depression/Support\\_Groups/](http://psychcentral.com/resources/Depression/Support_Groups/)>. You are not alone!

## -Pets

Any type of pet can be therapeutic to spend time with. Research has found that contact with an animal improves comfort, increases feelings of safety, decreases depression and anxiety, lowers blood pressure and stress, and even helps create trust between patients and medical professionals (Jackson). Furthermore, pets can help teach you about compassionate behavior, an essential skill for developing friendships. If you can't have your own cat, dog, horse, or the like, consider going to a pet spa or animal shelter to spend some time with those cute critters.

## Staying In Tune With 'Reality'

Media is a very powerful tool. Music, movies, fictitious books, news, cartoons, documentaries, video games, and the like inspire thoughts, emotions, and experiences we may never have had otherwise. They give us heroes to look up to and allow us to see romanticized or condensed stories of lifestyles we may wish embrace or strive for. However, one must be aware of how media is influencing them.



Consider the media and entertainment you voluntarily and involuntarily experience. Are you utilizing media in a destructive manner to make your mood worse? Try going without media (no music, movies, fictitious books, etc) and see what happens. How do you feel? What do you do with your time instead? I have found that these can be addictions that perpetuate an avoidance of emotions, thoughts, creativity, and habits. While sometimes avoiding thoughts and feelings is healthy, it can also prevent getting better or fixing bad situations. Media can also consume your time to the point of preventing you from experiencing fulfillment in life. The same goes for news. What do you really need to know about? Are you drowning in the depression of media sensationalism and propaganda when you should be caring for your local community? You don't need it! Once you realize what is beneficial to you and what is not, add back in those items and be wary of others. I went five months without media and felt better than I ever had before. During that time I would only watch a movie or listen to music if others were experiencing it with me, which was rare. Afterward I no longer had the same addiction to media and entertainment, but could see, for instance, that music inspired me in certain situations and video games or television helped me cope when I really needed to stop thinking about something in a negative feedback loop. The break also gave me time to do more fulfilling things like make art and hang out with friends.

In general, transform your hobbies into methods of self-care and pro-social behavior. Be conscious and selective of what you experience, because it all shapes who you are and what you think about. This may be difficult at first, but as you replace fiction with reality, life becomes its own exciting adventure story!

Simultaneously, or instead of removing media from your life, you can study “media literacy.” Understanding media will help you understand the underlying messages being presented, see biases, and question the authenticity of the information given. From here you can begin removing oppressive and demeaning media from your life, and substitute appropriate alternatives in their place.

## **Image and Acceptance of Who You Are**

Depression can also be caused by health problems or feelings of inadequacy. It is important to realize that you are not alone feeling judged or not good enough. Within the United States of America almost EVERYONE grows up with a lot of self-doubt over their perceived imperfections. This is because our media portrays images of perfection to strive for that are actually fictitious or

unhealthy in nature. There are times when having self-doubt or being judged make sense, and it makes sense to improve your life in such a way that you no longer are judged or have a need to feel self-doubt. Other times ignoring those stigmas makes more sense, especially when you have no control over the part of yourself in question, or when it is an unhealthy part to change. In these cases, practicing meditation, mindfulness, and doing things that boost your self-esteem can help alleviate negative feelings. A good starting point is to befriend people who do not judge you and who accept your personal qualities.

Another option is to create an “abundance mentality” in your life (Edberg). Think about the positive things as well as the possibilities of positive things in your life instead of what you do not or cannot have. While it is difficult to alter learned behaviors, you have the most power over how you feel, as well as the ability to deflect or reduce what you don’t want to feel.

## Find Purpose and Meaning In Life



Viktor Frankl wrote in his book, Man's Search For Meaning, “...it is a characteristic of the American culture that, again and again, one is commanded and ordered to 'be happy.' But happiness cannot be pursued; it must ensue. One must have a reason to 'be happy'” (Smith, Emily). In other words, happiness is nothing without first having a sense of meaning or purpose in one's existence.

Deciding on a specific purpose or passion can be a helpful grounding point to live life by, especially when you have a million options to choose from. To

me, life is about finding happiness while not infringing on others' well-being. It is a statement I can go back to when I become depressed about the way my life is going, or need guidance in how to act. To others, purpose involves religion, spirituality, happiness, love, a hobby, friendship, and providing services. There's absolutely nothing wrong living without an overall purpose or taking time to figure one or several out, so don't get discouraged. It's just helpful for some people. If you do have something you are passionate about though, create reminders for yourself about it. Put up pictures, place stickers on your laptop, wear a button, or get a tattoo. Anything that will stimulate thoughts and feelings regarding that thing no matter what mood you are in.

## **Beliefs as Covers for Depression**

Some people will explain and justify their depressive behaviors through covers such as spirituality, religion, and philosophy. I personally did this while growing up. The spiritual principles I created validated my symptoms of depression as something that was not a problem. This coping mechanism did help me get through my more troublesome years "safely," though I've witnessed others utilize spiritual principles in destructive acts either against themselves or others. I would not say that spirituality discovered through a depressed perspective negates those spiritual experiences, but I would deeply analyze what is an excuse for a depressive habit and what is truly spiritual or religious.

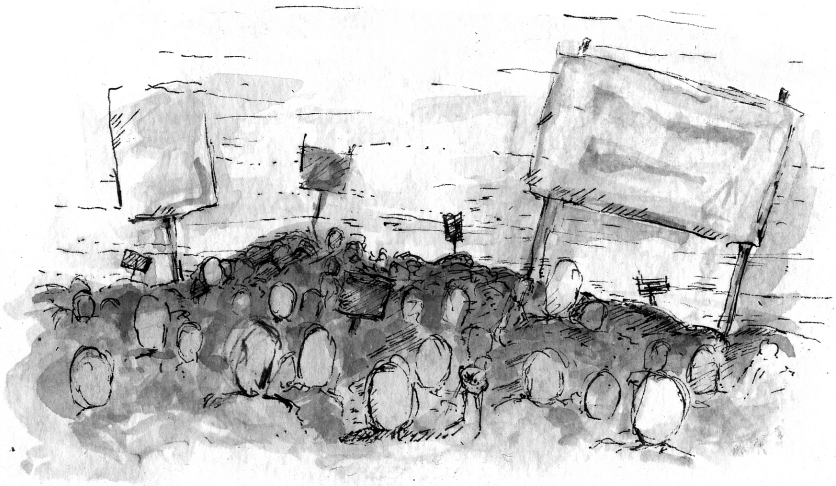
## **Coming to Terms with a Traumatic Past**

Some cases of depression are caused by events that occurred years ago. Confronting difficult experiences from the past can be liberating, and reduce stress. This is difficult, as traumatic events are often something people want to push out of their memory. However, they are another key to accepting oneself and understanding one's experience of avoidance, fear, and depression. The process of confronting inner demons is a long and difficult one. Even if it takes years or decades, do it only when you feel able to emotionally. It may be helpful to fully separate from the causes of trauma and avoid situations which trigger traumatic memories. Doing so will provide a safe healing space and room for analytical thought. Try writing about your past and emotions in detail and how different events affect your current behavior and mood. A friend or family member may also give special insight into your memories if you are able to share your story openly. Even if you are unable to confront your past trauma directly, at the very least you will know what causes your current behaviors and thus be able to cope with them better.

## **A Section for Teenagers: Coping with Factors Beyond Your Control**

As a teenager, you may have little control over the causes feeding your depression. This is because of oppression by factors that cannot easily be changed. Examples include family, age, chemical changes, and discrimination. Having been through it myself, I want to apologize for the awful support teenagers receive to escape oppressive environments, and want to assure you that it usually does get better. Outlets exist, they just aren't always let known to teenagers. These include getting a GED to finish high school early, dual enrolling in a community college, transferring schools or transferring to an "alternative school", seeking legal emancipation from your family, talking to a counselor, attending summer camps, or applying for travel or exchange programs. You might also consider sharing your difficulties with friends at school, a counselor, or online.

## **Activism and Depression**



Being an activist is a fulfilling role to live. It brings a great amount of meaning to one's life attempting to change society into a better place. On the other hand, it can be excruciatingly difficult and often means dealing with guilt, anger, cultural deprivation, as well as anxiety attempting to create change against enormous resistance. These factors may make the goal of an activist group seem daunting at times, especially with the negative remarks received from opposition. Here are some thoughts to help you maintain a positive mood and avoid burnout while fighting for you what you believe in.

### **-Balance Time**

First, the most important thing to consider during times of difficulty in an activist group is that even the smallest accomplishment is moving towards positive results where there haven't been any yet. Watching or reading about successful activist campaigns can be inspiring, and seeking help from activist peers uplifting. Also consider the size of steps you personally take to reach a given goal. Are you doing more than you can handle? It's easy to believe that everything will collapse if you reduce the amount of work you do, but the more long term work you can do, the better. Why not take actions which are more manageable, or recruit new members? It's important to realize that as an activist, one is not living the life they would be living if the world fit their desires. What would you be doing otherwise? I believe it is important to occasionally live that life, or incorporate parts of it into your activist life. It's also okay to stop and take a rest if things get too stressful. Know your limitations, and pass the work on when that limit is reached. It is better to say "no" to new tasks than it is to become overwhelmed and ignore your personal health.

### **-Cultural Deprivation and Creating An Alternative Culture**

Some activists reject mainstream culture and do their best to create what they can of an alternative culture. With only so many people to celebrate this culture though, it can be difficult to maintain and lead to cultural deprivation. However, I believe that a solid culture is essential for a healthy mind and community. Create a community identity with boundaries and traditions. Boundaries state how your community functions and what the allowable limits are. They might include things like how to speak, meeting procedures, substance policies, and membership termination rules. Traditions provide a reason for people to gather and celebrate the important events time has unveiled in their lives and cultural history. They act as reminders of historical events and give emphasis to what it means to be part of a collective identity. Traditions can also help create attention to your cause for outsiders to plug into, for instance an annual parade or benefit party. Continue to celebrate, even if you have to make up your own holidays or traditions!

### **-Privilege and Guilt**

Activists may also experience guilt regarding their lifestyle or position of privilege, especially from the blame they receive from other activists. It is important to be aware of your lifestyle and privileges, but alongside this be aware that you are one of the few trying to make positive changes in the world, and that

guilt will only prevent you from making these changes effectively. No one can live a lifestyle free of some amount of negative impact, but anyone can live a life that makes a large positive impact. Utilize your privileges by acting where others cannot, and help those with fewer privileges than you.

### **-Blame and Oppressive Anti-Oppression**

Other activists live with a lot of blame and hatred regarding the lifestyles and privilege of others. People who spread the teachings of anti-oppression with aggression are in fact oppressive themselves. This mark of oppressive anti-oppression is extremely unhealthy for activist struggles. Hearing or reading words of blame shuts down a person's ability to even desire to learn more about an activist group's goals. That, or it instills an unhealthy and unnecessary guilt in activist peers. Individuals who communicate with oppressive anti-oppression should be mediated with or removed from the group. Education should always be non-violent!

### **-Substance Abuse**

All these stresses together lead some activists and groups to use substances as coping mechanisms to fight depression. Substances such as alcohol and cigarettes often make depression worse though. This substance abuse can be difficult to avoid in alternative or activist social circles. It may be worthwhile to have a discussion regarding it amongst your peers. Why do you use substances? What role does it play? Is it a coping mechanism? What does it say regarding the time you are giving for your personal health?

### **-Make it Fun**

Finally, make activism fun. Be sure that you are including humor, silliness, and social downtime with your work. This will not only help draw new people in, but also prevent burnout for existing members.

# Managing A Depressive Episode

## **If You Have A Depressive Episode**

Read the checklist on the back cover of this booklet to help figure out what the trigger was. Focus on addressing that trigger if possible, and otherwise do one or several of the following depending on how you feel:

- Seek out someone to talk to who can reassure you.
- Write. Process the thoughts in your head, or recall the best moments of your life.
- Meditate and practice mindfulness.
- Go to sleep.
- Play a game that will occupy your mental energy.
- Call a support line like the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

## **If You Have A Depressive Episode Associated with a Negative Occurrence**

If you have a depressive episode caused by external factors such as the death of a loved one or breaking up with your partner, there are a number of ways to cope with it. First realize that only time can heal some emotional injuries. Have a safe space, whether it be a person or place, where you feel comfortable and unthreatened. See, call, or write a friend or family member whom you can relate the experience to. Hopefully they can reassure you and help calm some of your feelings. If explaining your situation is difficult, more subtly ask for a hug or just to hang out and do something like watch a movie. This may be an easier means of understanding you are indeed loved and provide some calming energy. Another option is to use a non-destructive act which pulls your mind away from obsessive negative thoughts. These acts might include reading a book, working on art, socializing, going to sleep on time, meditating, watching television, listening to music, exercising, playing a game, or other methods outlined in this booklet.

If things are especially bad and you are thinking of suicide, call 1-800-273-8255 for someone to talk to through the National Suicide Hotline. There is help and hope for you.

## **If Someone You Care About Has A Depressive Episode**

Inevitably a friend, family member, or peer will become depressed. They may seem unfamiliar and act in a manner that is difficult for you. This is because their sense of reality has changed. If you choose to help, you will need to discuss their thoughts with them while dispelling false ones, as well as figure out the root cause of their depression. You can't help someone who doesn't want to be helped, but if they do, the end goal is to de-escalate extreme emotions and resume their thinking within terms of their normal reality. To do so, you'll need to analyze several things and respond accordingly.

First, do they know they are depressed? At times it can be very difficult for a person to acknowledge that their behavior and mood are abnormal. Try starting a conversation with them about it. "You've seemed sort of down recently, is anything the matter?" If they don't believe that they are experiencing depression even when told, try incorporating coping activities into your social time with them. These might include things such as exercising, eating healthy, meditation, and others outlined previously in this guide.

If they do accept that they are depressed, try finding out why they feel that way and see if you can do anything for them. Listening is key. Let them have space to talk and express their feelings and needs. Is their depression caused by a recent event, or does it seem more like something that has been going on for a long time?.

Next, analyze where their depression stems from. This may be different from what they say they're depressed about. Consider their lifestyle habits such as diet, exercise, and getting outdoors. In the past, I have rationalized my depression through scorning different aspects of my life, when in reality it was likely caused by a combination of not getting outside enough, being malnourished, and living in a stressful environment. I simply found it easier to blame things like my appearance for being depressed rather than the root causes. Once you have some ideas, talk about them and make some suggestions. Even if they don't follow your advice, at the very least the ideas will be there if they change their mind.

Again, If things are especially bad and your friend is thinking of suicide, call 1-800-273-8255 for someone to talk to through the National Suicide Hotline. There is help and hope for you.

## How To Know When You Should Talk To A Medical Professional

You might hesitate about approaching a stranger to discuss your emotional state, but it can be really helpful to see a medical professional to help you cope with depression and anxiety. At the very least they will give you new options to utilize as coping mechanisms. Only you can say when the time is right to see a doctor, therapist, herbalist, or other medical professional, but here are some ideas:

- You feel miserable all the time no matter what you do.
- You hurt yourself or have thoughts of hurting yourself or others.
- You have suicidal thoughts.
- You cannot handle taking care of yourself and become unhealthy.
- You have repetitive negative thoughts.
- You have anxiety which interferes with your ability to live a healthy life or the life you want to live.
- You realize you need help.
- When your depression interferes with basic social, professional, or interpersonal functioning on a day-to-day basis.

Just keep in mind that some doctors will only recommend taking pharmaceuticals while in fact there are many other options to choose from, or pair with, pharmaceutical treatment.



# Resources

I strongly suggest exploring other resources. Each perspective has its own strengths for giving you a better image of mental health and how to handle it or help others with theirs.

## **Icarus Project**

"We are a network of people living with and/or affected by experiences that are commonly diagnosed and labeled as psychiatric conditions. We believe these experiences are mad gifts needing cultivation and care, rather than diseases or disorders. By joining together as individuals and as a community, the intertwined threads of madness, creativity, and collaboration can inspire hope and transformation in an oppressive and damaged world. Participation in The Icarus Project helps us overcome alienation and tap into the true potential that lies between brilliance and madness." The Icarus Project website includes many free booklets covering various aspects of mental health..

<<http://theicarusproject.net/>>

## **Mind Freedom International**

"In a spirit of mutual cooperation, MindFreedom leads a nonviolent revolution of freedom, equality, truth and human rights that unites people affected by the mental health system with movements for justice everywhere."

<<http://www.mindfreedom.org>>

## **AllAboutDepression.com**

"For more than 10 years providing accurate, current, and relevant information about clinical depression to the public."

## **The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching**

In this book, Thich Nhat Hanh presents the fundamental teachings of Buddhist practice. These teachings are not so much religious or spiritual ones as they are a step-by-step guide to controlling emotions, learning mindfulness, navigating through suffering, and finding happiness and love in life.

# Conclusion



Worldwide, humans live in conditions that trigger depression. It is perhaps what we have traded for technology, convenience, overpopulation, efficiency, and individuality. So what's the best way to cope in these difficult times? Schedule your day, get outside, garden, eat nutritious meals, write, find support through friends and groups, practice mindfulness, exercise, maintain a positive environment, and accept yourself! I hope you have found this guide useful. In writing it, I periodically ignored my mental health, but I'm glad to have seen a project to completion, and to now understand so much more about my personal wellness. I wish you good luck in your endeavors toward contentment, and thanks for reading.

# Bibliography

American Cancer Society, Inc.. "Vitamin B Complex." Cancer.org. May 2010. Web. 24 Apr. 2012.

Arasteh, Kamyar. "A Beneficial Effect of Calcium Intake on Mood." *Journal of Orthomolecular Medicine* Vol. 9, No. 4 (1994): 199-204. The Center For The Improvement Of Human Functioning International. Web. 10 May 2012.

Arnstein Mykletun, et al. "Association Between Magnesium Intake And Depression And Anxiety In Community-Dwelling Adults: The Hordaland Health Study." *The Australian And New Zealand Journal Of Psychiatry* 43.1 (2009): 45-52. MEDLINE. Web. 10 May 2012.

Benton, David. "Selenium Intake, Mood and Other Aspects of Psychological Functioning." *Nutritional Neuroscience* Vol. 5, Number 6 (Jan 2001): pp. 363-374(12). doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1028415021000055925>. Ingenta Connect. Web. 10 May 2012.

BioMed Central. "Global depression statistics." *ScienceDaily*, 25 Jul. 2011. Web. 20 Feb. 2012.

Boelens, PA, RR Reeves, WH Replogle, and HG Koenig. "A Randomized Trial of the Effect of Prayer on Depression and Anxiety." *International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, 39.4 (2009): 377-392.

Brauser, Deborah. "Psychedelic Drugs May Reduce Symptoms of Depression, Anxiety, and OCD." *MedScape News Today*. 25 Aug 2010. Web. 25 Feb 2012.

B.S. Gupta and Uma Gupta. "Caffeine and Behavior." P. 21. 1999. Google Books. No Date. Web. 29 March 2012.

Busch, Sandi. "Wheat Bran Nutrition Information." *Livestrong*. 11 Mar. 2011. Web. 8 Aug. 2012.

C. Stough, et al. "Chronic MDMA (Ecstasy) Use, Cognition And Mood." *Psychopharmacology* 173.3/4 (2004): 434-439. Academic Search Premier. Web. 20 Feb. 2012.

Carpenter, David, J. "St. John's Wort And S-Adenosyl Methionine As "Natural" Alternative To Conventional Antidepressants In The Era Of The Suicidality Boxed Warning: What Is The Evidence For Clinically Relevant Benefit?." *Alternative Medicine Review* 16.1 (2011): 17-39. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 25 Mar. 2012.

Carrillo, J.A., and J. Benitez. "Clinically Significant Pharmacokinetic

Interactions Between Dietary Caffeine And Medications." *Clinical Pharmacokinetics* 39.2 (2000): 127-153. Academic Search Premier. Web. 29 Mar. 2012.

Childs E, Hohoff, et al. "Association Between ADORA2A and DRD2 Polymorphisms and Caffeine-Induced Anxiety." *Neuropsychopharmacology* (2008) 33:2791-2800. National Institute of Health Public Access. Web. 29 March 2012.

Cloud, John. "Was Timothy Leary Right?" *Time Magazine*. 19 Apr 2007. Web. 25 Feb 2012.

Cohen, M, N Solowij, and V Carr. "Cannabis, Cannabinoids And Schizophrenia: Integration Of The Evidence." *Australian & New Zealand Journal Of Psychiatry* 42.5 (2008): 357-368. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 21 Feb. 2012.

Coulston, CM, M Perdices, and CC Tennant. "The Neuropsychology Of Cannabis And Other Substance Use In Schizophrenia: Review Of The Literature And Critical Evaluation Of Methodological Issues." *Australian & New Zealand Journal Of Psychiatry* 41.11 (2007): 869-884. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 22 Feb. 2012.

Columbia University. "Q & A On Bright Light Therapy." No date. Web. 24 Feb 2012.

"Crocus sativus: Saffron Crocus." White Flower Farm. No Date. Web. 26 Mar 2012.

Crowther, Penny. "Vitamin D: Why We Need More Of The Sunshine Vitamin." *Positive Health* 167 (2010): 1. Alt HealthWatch. Web. 20 Feb. 2012.

Darakhshan J. Haleem, et al. "Long-Term Consumption Of Sugar-Rich Diet Decreases The Effectiveness Of Somatodendritic Serotonin-1A Receptors." *Nutritional Neuroscience* 11.6 (2008): 277-282. Academic Search Premier. Web. 10 Apr. 2012.

Davison, K. Michelle. "The Determinants of Food Intake in Individuals with Mood Disorders." University of Calgary. DSpace. Jan. 2010. Web. 10 Apr. 2012.

Davison, Karen M., and Bonnie J. Kaplan. "Nutrient Intakes Are Correlated With Overall Psychiatric Functioning In Adults With Mood Disorders." *Canadian Journal Of Psychiatry* 57.2 (2012): 85-92. Academic Search Premier. Web. 10 May 2012.

Deans, Emily, M.D. "Could Soda and Sugar Be Causing Your Depression?" *Psychology Today*. Sussex Publishers, LLC. 24 May 2011. Web. 8 Feb 2012.

Degenhardt, L, W Hall, and M Lynskey. "Exploring The Association Between Cannabis Use And Depression." *Addiction* 98.11 (2003): 1493-1504. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 21 Feb. 2012.

Delude, Cathryn M. "Brain researchers explain why old habits die hard." MIT News. 19 Oct 2005. Web. 20 Jun 2013.

"Dietary Supplement Fact Sheet: Vitamin D." Office of Dietary Supplements. National Institutes of Health. USA.gov. No date. Web. 15 Jul 2012.

Donovan, Patricia. "Afterbirth: Study Asks If We Could Derive Benefits from Ingesting Placenta. University of Buffalo. News Center. 27 Mar. 2012. Web. 8 Aug. 2012.

Dwyer, Anna, V., Dawn, L. Whitten, and Jason, A. Hawrelak. "Herbal Medicines, Other Than St. John's Wort, In The Treatment Of Depression: A Systematic Review." *Alternative Medicine Review* 16.1 (2011): 40-49. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 22 Feb. 2012.

Edberg, Henrik. "How to Create an Abundance Mentality." The Positivity Blog. 30 Jan. 2008. Web. 16 Nov. 2012.

Evans, Dr. Mike. "23 and 1/2 Hours" Online Video. YouTube. 2 Dec 2011. Web. 20 Feb 2012.

Fournier J, et al. "Antidepressant Drug Effects and Depression Severity." *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (2010) ;303(1):47-53. doi: 10.1001/jama.2009.1943. Web. Mar 25 2012.

Gail C. Farmer, et al. "Alcohol Use And Depression Symptoms Among Employed Men And Women." *American Journal Of Public Health* 77.6 (1987): 704-707. Academic Search Premier. Web. 20 Feb. 2012.

Gardiner, P, and KJ Kemper. "Natural" Remedies For Depression: Are They Safe? Do They Work?." *Contemporary Pediatrics* 23.9 (2006): 58. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 5 Apr. 2012.

"Griffonia simplicifolia." Siris Impex. No Date. Web. Apr. 24 2012.

Grohol, John M.. "Is Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy Effective?" PsychCentral. Web. 22 Feb 2012.

Gross, Terry. "Bacterial Bonanza: Microbes Keep Us Alive." NPR Fresh Air from WHYY. 15 Sept. 2010. Web. 26 Jun. 2013.

Gross, Terry. "Habits: How They Form And How To Break Them." NPR Fresh Air from WHYY. 5 Mar. 2012. Web. 24 Jun. 2013.

Hanh, Thich Nhat. *The Blooming of a Lotus*. Trans. Annabel Laity. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993. Print. P 15.

Harrison, Lewis. *Healing Depression Naturally*. U.S.A.: Kensington, 2004. P. 63. Print.

Head, KA, and GS Kelly. "Nutrients And Botanicals For Treatment Of Stress: Adrenal Fatigue, Neurotransmitter Imbalance, Anxiety, And Restless Sleep." *Alternative Medicine Review* 14.2 (2009): 114-140. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 22 Feb. 2012.

Hirschfeld RM. "History and evolution of the monoamine hypothesis of depression." *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* 61 Suppl 6 (2000): 4-6. US National Library of Medicine. PubMed. Web. 11 May 2012.

"How Much Sleep Do We Really Need?" National Sleep Foundation. No Date. Web. 26 Mar 2012.

Hughes, Edward. "Art Therapy As A Healing Tool For Sub-Fertile Women." *Journal Of Medical Humanities* 31.1 (2010): 27-36. Academic Search Premier. Web. 2 Mar. 2012.

Jackson, Justine. "Animal-Assisted Therapy: The Human-Animal Bond In Relation To Human Health and Wellness." Winona State University. P. 7-8. Web. Spring 2012.

"Jessica Green: Are we filtering the wrong microbes?" Jessica Green. *Ted Talks*. Aug. 2011. Web. 17 Apr. 2012.

Judith Paice, et al. "Art Therapy For Relief Of Symptoms Associated With HIV/AIDS." *AIDS Care* 21.1 (2009): 64-69. MEDLINE. Web. 2 Mar. 2012.

Kemper, Kathi, and Suzanne Danhauer. "Music as Therapy." *Southern Medical Journal*, 98.3 (2005): 282-288.

Kirsch I, Deacon BJ, Huedo-Medina TB, Scoboria A, Moore TJ, et al. (2008) Initial Severity and Antidepressant Benefits: A Meta-Analysis of Data Submitted to the Food and Drug Administration. *PLoS Med* 5(2): e45. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.0050045. 28 Feb 2008. Web. 4 Apr. 2012.

Krishnan, Vaishnav and Nestler, Eric. "Linking Molecules to Mood: New Insight Into the Biology of Depression." *American Journal of Psychiatry* (2010 November); 167(11): 1305-1320. doi: 10.1176/appi.ajp.2009.10030434. Web. 25 Apr. 2012.

Laura A. G. Armas, et al. "Vitamin D2 Is Much Less Effective than Vitamin D3 in Humans." *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* Vol. 89 Number 11 (Nov. 2004) 5387-5391. doi: 10.1210/jc.2004-0360. Web. 22 Jul. 2012.

Layton, Julia. "Is it true that if you do anything for three weeks it will become a habit?" howstuffworks. No date. Web. 20 Jun. 2013.

Levenson, CW. "Zinc: The New Antidepressant?." *Nutrition Reviews* 64.1 (2006): 39-42. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 4 May 2012.

Lienhard H, John. "No. 883: Smiles That Make You Happy." Engines of Our Ingenuity. University of Houston. No Date. Web. Apr 14, 2012.

Logan, Alan C. "Omega-3 fatty acids and major depression: A primer for the mental health professional." *Lipids in Health and Disease*. 3: 25. (Nov. 2004). doi: 10.1186/1476-511X-3-25. US national Library of Medicine. National Institutes of Health. Web. 2 Sep. 2012.

M Brown, et al. "Dampness And Mold In The Home And Depression: An Examination Of Mold-Related Illness And Perceived Control Of One's Home As Possible Depression Pathways." *American Journal Of Public Health* 97.10 (2007): 1893-1899. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 22 Feb. 2012.

Marano, Daniel A. "Soil Salvation." *Psychology Today* 41.5 (2008): 57-58. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO. Web. 6 Nov. 2009.

"Poor Diet Link To Depression And Anxiety." *Australian Nursing Journal* 19.3 (2011): 20. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 8 Feb. 2012.

"Meditation In Psychotherapy. An Ancient Spiritual Practice Is Finding New Uses In The Treatment Of Mental Illness." *The Harvard Mental Health Letter / From Harvard Medical School* 21.10 (2005): 1-4. MEDLINE. Web. 21 Feb. 2012.

MedlinePlus. "Depression." U.S. National Library of Medicine. National Institutes of Health. 25 Mar. 2012. Web. 8 Jul. 2013.

Newitz, Annalee. "Eat a Lunch That Keeps You Productive All Afternoon." *Life Hacker*. 24 Aug 2007. Web. 24 Feb 2012.

Paula Goolkasian, et al. "Effects Of Brief And Sham Mindfulness Meditation On Mood And Cardiovascular Variables." *Journal Of Alternative & Complementary Medicine* 16.8 (2010): 867-873. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 22 Feb. 2012.

"Phosphorus." University of Maryland Medical Center. 17 Jun. 2012. Web. 12 May 2012.

procon.org. "Is medical marijuana an effective treatment for depression, bipolar disorders, anxiety, and similar mood disorders?" May 2005. Web. 8 Feb. 2012.

Richard, Michael. "Best Air-Filtering House Plants According to NASA!" 9 Feb 2009. Web. 21 Feb 2012.

Ross J. Baldessarini, et al. "Coffee And Cigarette Use: Association With Suicidal Acts In 352 Sardinian Bipolar Disorder Patients." *Bipolar Disorders* 11.5 (2009): 494-503. Academic Search Premier. Web. 20 Feb. 2012.

Ruiz-Belda, María-Angeles, José-Miguel Fernández-Dols, and Kim Barchard. "Spontaneous Facial Expressions Of Happy Bowlers And Soccer Fans."

Cognition & Emotion 17.2 (2003): 315. Academic Search Premier. Web. 15 Apr. 2012.

S Korkmaz, et al. "Effects Of Green Buildings On Employee Health And Productivity." American Journal Of Public Health 100.9 (2010): 1665-1668. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 22 Feb. 2012.

Scheel, KR, and JS Westefeld. "Heavy Metal Music and Adolescent Suicidality: An Empirical Investigation." Adolescence, 34.134 (1999): 253-273.

Shaw, Kelly, Jane Turner, and Christopher Del Mar. "Are Tryptophan And 5-Hydroxytryptophan Effective Treatments For Depression? A Meta-Analysis\*." Australian & New Zealand Journal Of Psychiatry 36.4 (2002): 488-491. Academic Search Premier. Web. 20 Feb. 2012.

Simopoulos AP. "The importance of the ratio of omega-6/omega-3 essential fatty acids." Biomedicine and Pharmacotherapy 56(8) (Oct 2002): 365-79. The Center for Genetics, Nutrition and Health. PubMed. Web. 12 May 2012.

Smith, Andrew P. "Caffeine, Cognitive Failures And Health In A Non-Working Community Sample." Human Psychopharmacology: Clinical & Experimental 24.1 (2009): 29-34. Academic Search Premier. Web. 20 Feb. 2012.

Smith, Emily Esfahani. "There's More to Life Than Being Happy." The Atlantic. 2013 Jan 9. Web. 27 Feb 2013.

Smith, Melinda, et al. "How to Sleep Better." HelpGuide.Org. Dec 2011. Web. 25 Feb 2012.

Sperm Bank, Inc. "8 Benefits of Male Masturbation." No date. Web. 25 Feb 2012.

Szabadi, E. "St. John's Wort And Its Active Principles In Depression And Anxiety." British Journal Of Clinical Pharmacology 62.3 (2006): 377-378. Academic Search Premier. Web. 20 Feb. 2012.

Szalavitz, Maia. "Ecstasy as Therapy: Have Some of its Negative Effects Been Overblown?" Time Healthland. 18 Feb 2011. Web. 25 Feb 2012.

Trapani, Gina. "Top 10 Ways to Sleep Smarter and Better." Life Hacker. 10 Oct 2007. Web. 24 Feb 2012.

U Koch, et al. "Depression, Anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder And Health-Related Quality Of Life And Its Association With Social Support In Ambulatory Prostate Cancer Patients." European Journal Of Cancer Care 19.6 (2010): 736-745. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 22 Feb. 2012.

Villarreal, Christina. "Antidepressant medications: effective treatment for depression or pharmaceutical industry scam?" examiner.com. 26 Apr 2010. Web. 25 Feb 2012.

Vitamin Basics. "Vitamin B12." No date. Web. 20 Feb 2012.

World's Healthiest Foods, The. "calcium." No date. Web. 10 May 2012.

World's Healthiest Foods, The. "folate." No date. Web. 20 Feb 2012.

World's Healthiest Foods, The. "iron." No date. Web. 12 May 2012.

World's Healthiest Foods, The. "magnesium." No date. Web. 10 May 2012.

World's Healthiest Foods, The. "omega-3 fatty acids." No date. Web. 20 Feb 2012.

World's Healthiest Foods, The. "potassium." No date. Web. 12 May 2012.

World's Healthiest Foods, The. "selenium." No date. Web. 10 May 2012.

World's Healthiest Foods, The. "vitamin B12." No date. Web. 20 Feb 2012.

World's Healthiest Foods, The. "vitamin C." No date. Web. 10 May 2012.

World's Healthiest Foods, The. "zinc." No date. Web. 10 May 2012.

Williamson, C. "Dietary Factors And Depression In Older People." *British Journal Of Community Nursing* 14.10 (2009): 422. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 8 Feb. 2012.

Young, Simon, N. "Bright Light For Nonseasonal Depression?." *Journal Of Psychiatry & Neuroscience* 36.5 (2011): E37-8. CINAHL with Full Text. Web. 23 Feb. 2012.

Zhang, Michelle, Line Robitaille, Shaun Eintracht, and L. John Hoffer. "Vitamin C Provision Improves Mood in Acutely Hospitalized Patients." *Nutrition*, 27.5 (2011): 530-533.



# My Mind

Adapted from the Icarus Project 'Mad Map'.

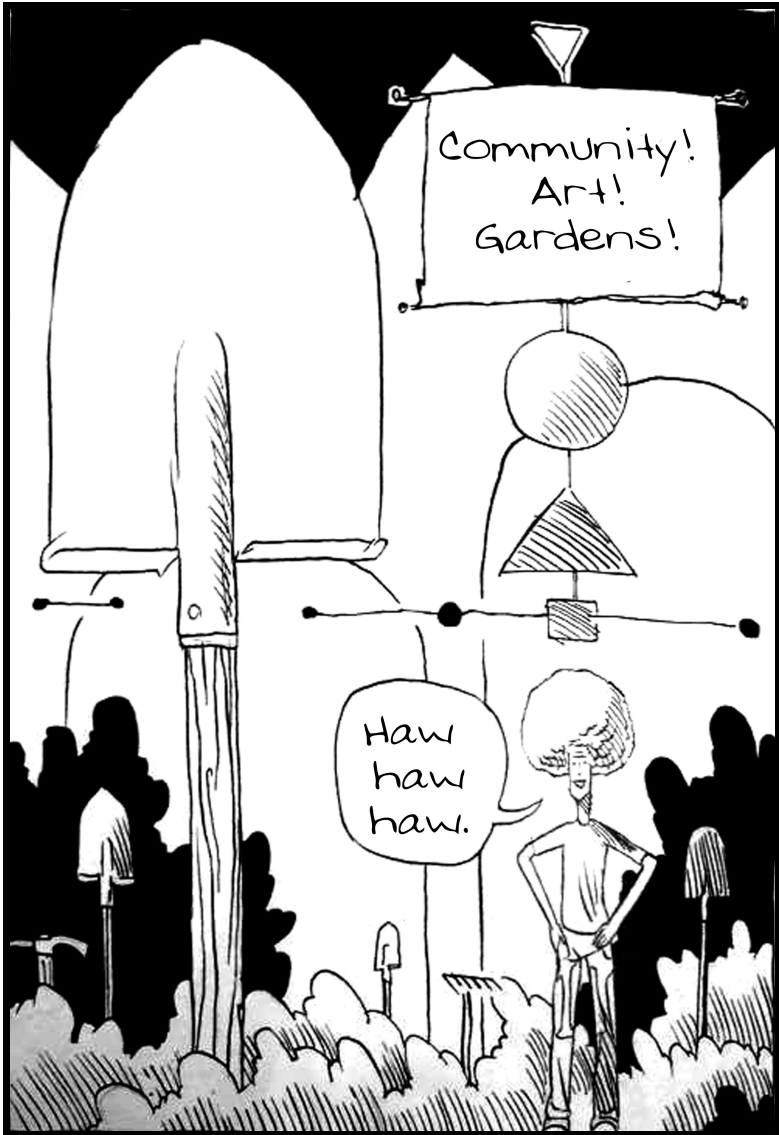
My Triggers

Things That Make Me Feel Better

People I Can Call



# About the Author



Sage Liskey does a little bit of everything. He writes, draws, sews, plays banjo, hikes, theorizes, watches foreign animation, reads about science, gardens, preserves food, participates in community, meditates, and everything else. He would like to one day start his own non-hierarchical, all-ages school that teaches a little bit about everything in a community setting.



# Mental Wellness Checklist

- Did you make a schedule for the day and week ahead? Did you follow it?
- Did you eat a nutritious meal?
- Have you gotten outside of your house?
- Did you get enough sleep?
- Have you taken breaks to rest from work?
- Did you consume any triggering foods or substances?
- Did you meditate, garden, or enjoy one of your hobbies?
- Did you have social contact with anyone today?



FACEBOOK.COM/RADCATPRESS  
RADCATPRESS@RISEUP.NET