



NCA NEWS

A Publication for Members
of National Consumer's
Advantage Association

2022

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- When Sadness Lingers
- Feeling Fatigued?
- Annual Meeting Proxy



When Sadness Lingers

Understanding and Treating Depression



It's normal to feel sad, down, or low at times. But these feelings can sometimes linger. They can get worse, too, eventually making it hard to do basic daily tasks. If you've had a depressed mood or a loss of interest or pleasure in most activities for at least two weeks, you may be experiencing depression.

Depression is a serious disorder. "It's not something that you can just 'push through,' or get through without help," says Dr. Kimberly Young, a mental health researcher at the University of Pittsburgh.

Depression isn't caused by a single thing. Some people's genes put them at risk for depression. Stressful situations may trigger depression. Examples include money problems, the loss of a loved one, or major life changes. Having a serious illness like cancer or heart disease can also lead to depression. And depression can

make such illnesses worse.

People may experience depression during pregnancy or after giving birth. This is called perinatal depression. Others feel depressed during certain seasons, most often in winter. This is called seasonal affective disorder, or SAD. Regardless of what's causing depression, treatments are available that can help many people feel better. And researchers are working on new options for those who need them.

Treatment Options

Depression can look different for different people. But there are some common symptoms (see the Wise Choices box). If you think you may be depressed, talk with your health care provider. Some infections or medical conditions can cause similar symptoms. Your provider can perform a physical exam and blood tests to look for possible causes.

If you have mild depression, your provider may recommend you first try counseling or talk therapy. "Therapy helps people learn how to get out of a hopeless state by viewing the world and themselves differently," says Dr. Michelle Craske, who studies depression at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Some lifestyle changes may help you feel better during treatment. Try to get some physical activity every day and eat regular, healthy meals. Avoid alcohol, nicotine, and drugs. Keep a regular sleep schedule. And stay connected to people who support you.

People with more severe depression may benefit from medication as well as therapy. "We have drugs that, in many people, work really well," says Dr. Todd Gould, who tests new treatments for depression at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. Depression-fighting drugs and therapy sometimes work better together.

However, these drugs, called antidepressants, can take many weeks to start working. And there's no way to know if they'll work ahead of time. You may have to try more than one drug, or a combination of drugs, to find something that will work for you. For some people, these types of drugs can have serious side effects that may require close monitoring.

Persistent Depression

For certain people, depression persists despite counseling and medication. This is called treatment-resistant depression.

Brain stimulation therapies may help some people with treatment-resistant depression.

Signs of Depression

Talk with your health care provider if you have any of these symptoms last for more than two weeks:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood.
- Feelings of hopelessness.
- Feelings of irritability, frustration, or restlessness.
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities.
- Decreased energy, fatigue, or feeling "slowed down."
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.
- Difficulty sleeping, early morning awakening, or oversleeping.
- Changes in appetite or unplanned weight changes.
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause that do not ease with treatment.
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts.
- If you or someone you know is thinking about hurting themselves, call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988.

These use electricity or magnets to directly change brain activity.

For people who don't feel better after trying at least two standard drugs, a drug called ketamine may be an option. Ketamine is usually injected into a vein. A type of ketamine that's been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat depression, called esketamine, is sprayed into the nose.

"There are two exciting aspects of ketamine treatment," says Gould. "One is that it's fast acting." It can make people feel better within hours. "The other is that it works in some people who don't respond to any other medications."

The downside of ketamine treatment is its side effects, Gould says. You may feel strange, woozy, or spacey during treatment. Some people can even experience dissociation, which is an out-of-body experience.

Gould is testing compounds made by the body when it breaks down ketamine as potential new treatments. "Our hope is that these compounds will have the same rapid antidepressant effect that ketamine does, but without the side effects," he says.

Testing New Therapies

Researchers have also been working on new types of talk therapy for depression. Craske's team is testing a type of therapy designed to help people focus on joy, excitement, and other positive moods.

"Standard treatments are better at reducing negative emotions than increasing positive emotions," she says. But people with depression often have the most trouble feeling positive things.

"We're trying to build your capacity to focus on and appreciate positive parts of your life," Craske says. "And in our early studies it's been remarkably effective."

Young and her team are using a technique called neurofeedback to help people with depression try to enjoy positive emotions and memories. The technique teaches people to directly control activity in different parts of their brain.

"Activity in certain brain areas is what allows you to use positive memories in a healthy way," Young says. Real-time imaging lets you watch blood flow to different brain areas. "We then teach you to make part of the brain more active when you're recalling positive memories." This activity makes the memories feel positive.

Craske and others are also interested in preventing depression before it develops. "That would mean starting at a very young age. But preventing the onset of depressed mood would have far more impact than treatment," she says.

Studies suggest that teaching skills like mindfulness may help prevent depression in kids at high risk. Mindfulness helps you focus on the present and on what's going on inside and around you without judgment. Craske's team is testing an app to teach teens such skills to manage intense negative emotions.

If you're struggling with depression, don't be ashamed or embarrassed to seek help, says Young. "We've moved past the days of 'we don't talk about depression.'"

Article reprinted from NIH-News In Health



Feeling Fatigued? Finding Possible Causes

Exhaustion seems to be on the rise. Fatigue is one of the symptoms most often reported by people with COVID-19, and their tiredness can linger. Add this to the many other causes of fatigue that existed before the pandemic—such as lack of sleep, mental health concerns, and health conditions like anemia or heart disease. Overall, it seems, we are one weary nation.

Fatigue can be helpful. It can be a warning sign that you need to ease up after strenuous exercise. Or it can make you rest if you get sick. But more often, fatigue creates problems. It can be an overwhelming and lasting feeling of exhaustion that makes it hard to do everyday tasks.

"There are different aspects of fatigue. It's generally agreed that the sensation of fatigue can involve difficulty in starting or continuing an activity," says Dr. Vicky Whittemore, who is involved in NIH's fatigue-related research programs. "It can involve the perception that the effort to perform an activity is more than should be needed."

Fatigue itself is not a disease. Rather, it's a symptom. It can be caused by viral infections, certain medications, unhealthy eating, cancer and its treatments, depression or anxiety, and more.

Because it has so many possible causes, it can be hard for doctors to diagnose the origins of someone's fatigue. This can make it difficult to develop an effective treatment plan. But your doctor can help you figure out where to start.

Making lifestyle changes can provide some people with relief (see the Wise Choices box for ideas). But these changes may not be enough for everyone. Certain health conditions can contribute to exhaustion. Some are treatable, such as a vitamin or mineral deficiency. But not much is known about other causes of fatigue.

One cause of debilitating fatigue is a serious disease called myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS). ME/CFS causes long-lasting, severe exhaustion, along with flu-like symptoms (called post-exertional malaise). People with ME/CFS may also have sleep problems, pain, or "brain fog." Brain fog is when you have trouble thinking or concentrating. Physical or mental activity can make ME/CFS symptoms worse.

Researchers have not yet found an effective way to diagnose or treat ME/CFS. However, its

symptoms overlap with those seen in people with Long COVID. Long COVID arises when COVID-19 symptoms last weeks or months after infection. Experts estimate that around 20% of individuals with Long COVID will also be diagnosed with ME/CFS.

These similarities create new opportunities for scientists to uncover the biology behind fatigue. So, NIH is bringing together researchers from different fields and is providing new funding to help scientists tackle the mysteries of these and other forms of fatigue.

"The study of Long COVID is bringing light to many issues that the ME/CFS community has been exploring for years," Whittemore says. "I think this research will help us better understand fatigue and get at the underlying mechanisms."

Article reprinted from NIH-News In Health



NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of the National Consumer's Advantage Association will be held at 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, Missouri, on Wednesday, December 14, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. (CST) for election of Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting and any adjournment thereof.

The above notice is given pursuant to the By-Laws of the Association.

PROXY

National Consumer's Advantage Association December 14, 2022 Annual Meeting of Members THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF NATIONAL CONSUMER'S ADVANTAGE ASSOCIATION

The undersigned member of the National Consumer's Advantage Association does hereby constitute and appoint the President of National Consumer's Advantage Association, the true and lawful attorney(s) of the undersigned with full power of substitution, to appear and act as the proxy or proxies of the undersigned at the Annual Meeting of the Members of National Consumer's Advantage Association and at any and all adjournments thereof, and to vote for and in the name, place and stead of the undersigned, as fully as the undersigned might or could do if personally present, as set forth below:

1. FOR [], or to [] WITHHOLD AUTHORITY to vote for, the following nominees for Board of Directors:
Bob Askew, Andrea Bennett, Joe Wang, Joshua D. Farrell, and Daniel Malloy
1. In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

This proxy, when properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned member. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the election of directors and officers.

Dated: _____, 2022

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Please date and sign and return promptly to NCA Association, 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, Missouri 63131 whether or not you expect to attend this meeting. The Proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event that you attend the meeting.

Chesterfield, Missouri
November 4, 2022
Date



The NCA News is published by:
National Consumer's Advantage Association

For information regarding your membership
and association services, call or write:

**Membership Services Office
National Consumer's Advantage Association
12444 Powerscourt Drive
Suite 500A
St. Louis, MO 63131**

1-800-992-8044 or (636) 530-7200

Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative, enlightening, and helpful to you. While all information contained herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to change.

Articles are not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

Consult your doctor before starting
any exercise program.