MOOD HEALTH

SECTION SUMMARY

Note: Unlike the other single-page Section Summaries, the topic of Mood Health entails greater depth to put into perspective and impart essential personal insights. Let's take this head on!

Sometimes 'the battle within' is against an enemy other than ourselves.

Everyone hits a low point that feels like some level of depression. The key difference between "normal" people and those who suffer from clinical depression is their elasticity to bounce back. The other difference is how deep one can sink. If you've never experienced the full depths of depression, consider yourself lucky.

So whether you identify with this topic for yourself and/or someone close, the goal is to provide added insights and tools to overcome Mood Health challenges. It's also highly possible that you lack first-hand experience. That could change. Too many people suffer in silence. Suicide rates have risen significantly over the past 20+ years. Depression touches nearly everyone's lives. We're beyond overdue to shift our societal paradigms.

Some strides have been made to dissipate the stigmas to a degree. But we're still nowhere close to moving beyond the misconceptions and shadow one's mentality regarding these health afflictions, which means we're still on our own. We'll confront those stigmas in short order.

The true insidiousness of this affliction, especially at the lower level, is that depression is almost indiscernible to the sufferer, let alone observers. Depression creeps up on you. It physically sabotages your brain and impedes you from living life to the fullest.

It can be as subtle as a persistent lack of motivation to do basic tasks. It could be someone who's falling behind on things and is unsure why. That person may find that keeping up with life's demands feels like wading through quicksand. The deeper the depression, the further they sink and the harder it becomes to escape.

Very often, it's not until you lift out of that funk that you realize you have been out of touch with feeling like yourself and have been depressed all along. This realization is likely to happen after an extended period of time.

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We'll keep this topline and refer shortly to our Mood Scale that illustrates the clinical symptoms about depression and elevation.

For those who've fallen into the mild range for whatever reasons and for however long, keep in mind that – as bad as that feels – it's still no where near what it's like to be in the depths of moderate or severe depression where everything seems distorted. Their perception can only intepret the world with the opposite of rose-colored lenses. Everything is just grey and bleak spiraling with hopelessness.

We also need to take a closer look at symptoms of mood elevation such as, manic impulses, behaviors and increasingly something more overt. In contrast to how depression sneaks up on you and stays under the surface for prolonged periods, manic behavior is exponentially obvious and can rapidly worsens. Left unchecked, it becomes more destructive as one elevates further from reality.

As with mild depression, hypomania can dramatically skew one's perception. The main difference is that elevation is a lot less obvious to the person experiencing it, while depression is more obvious to those who know they battle it.

With everything so magnified and not entirely reality-based, you may start to think that the world would be better off without me. If you or someone close to you is in trouble or headed for it, please take charge and seek help for everyone's benefit.

Speaking with someone you trust or being there for someone else, gives you or that person a safety net. Those who are suffering will often close themselves off, which makes it challenging to provide them with support.

There's also a tendency among sufferers to push others away, especially their loved ones. The fact of the matter is that there's no easy answer here and that every person and circumstance are different.

This leads us back to the societal stigmas and individual hang-ups with professional therapy and medications to correct chemical imbalances.

Some barriers seem to be dissipating, especially with there being a seeming boom of the coaching industry. Someone who invests in their career by having a business coach is admired for their commitment to being a better leader. Those who hire life coaches are praised for their devotion [like yours] to achieve their full potential.

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But do you think society should have a problem with having a marriage counselor to try to save a committed relationship? Somehow it's still less acceptable for those coping with life challenges and need greater stability, or are seeking to make more sense of their past by seeing a personal therapist.

There's a prevailing restraint, especially for guys. It sounds something like, "no way am I calling up some witch doctor to lie on some proverbial couch and pour my heart out." Sometimes it can be especially difficult to get out of your own way, but there's also something to be said for being strong enough on the inside to know something's wrong and when you need help. It doesn't have to be forever.

If there's any silver lining with Covid, it's that Telehealth is now easily accessible. Those who'd otherwise suffer in silence can just reach out online and get almost immediate support from a professional, go through an intake to see where they're at and discuss their options. If you're still not sure or have a loved one in jeopardy, call the NAMI helpline at 800-950-6264. Again, that number is 800-950-6264.

Beyond therapy, there's sometimes an actual chemical imbalance. Sometimes, medication is the only intervention and course to restore well-being, especially with manic elevation. In such cases, medication may be at least 80% of the solution, which is to say that no amount of "talk therapy" will restore well-being.

Apart from social stigmas and the clinical divisions in our healthcare system, we need to cast aside any hang-ups we or anyone else has about these disorders.

It's time to clear something up. The human brain is the most vital organ of the human body. This topic is about brain health, which is part of physical health.

Let's talk about acceptable maintenance medications for a minute. Many people rely on statins to manage high cholesterol or blood thinners for heart disease. Others routinely take pills to regulate their thyroid or sleep. Those medications are for the brain. So are treatments for diseases like Multiple Sclerosis, but they are distinguished because they affect the body.

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Other examples of common medications that affect the brain include daily vitamins, aspirin and ibuprofen. These are socially acceptable. Still, whatever medications taken are done in privacy. So, why would anyone still have a hang-up about taking the best care of themselves? Because society says so? So many who contend with depression, in particular, continue to suffer in silence.

This brings us back to the notion that Mood Health is another way of describing the biochemical reality of how our daily physical brain chemistry controls our perception more than we realize.

Hopefully, we've reached a point beyond obvious. However temporary or persistent a mood or mental health impairment is, this can be classified as being sick in the same way one might catch a cold in mild cases, or the flu or pneumonia in moderate or more severe cases, respectively.

If you ever find yourself unable to rebound or feel like you're in a freefall and sinking lower, seek help. This also applies to helping someone else in need.

Do whatever it takes. If you find that is the case personally, patience, persistence and self-compassion are vital to your core health.

With those priorities in order, here's how your remaining Mood Health exploration looks.

DAY 8 Activities

- Mood Health Video
- Mood Health Section Summary (you are here)
- Mood Scale / Clinical Symptoms
- Mood Health Resource Page Visit

DAY 9 Activities

- 3-Day Rule Contingency Plan
- Happiness Chemicals Grid

DISCLAIMER: *This information is not intended to provide a psychological or psychiatric diagnosis. Your interpretation of this content does not constitute a professional counseling or coaching relationship*.

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