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Beating Depression: Kathryn's Story

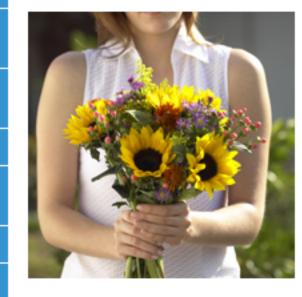
Kathryn Goetzke

shares her personal strategies and goals for living with major

Major Depression: One Woman's Quest for Understanding

Help for depression can come from many sources. Learn how Kathryn Goetzke uses her personal experience with depression to help others as well as herself.

By Chris Iliades, MD Medically reviewed by Pat F. Bass III, MD, MPH



An estimated 15 million American adults, or 5 to 8 percent of the population in a given year, have depression. The good news is that up to 90 percent of them could be helped by managing depression with talk therapy, medication, and lifestyle changes. The bad news is that the social stigma of depression keeps many people from seeking the help they need.

Kathryn Goetzke is determined to change that. Her experience with major depression has led her to not only change her own life, but also to try to change the way others view depression. "When most people think of depression, they see a person alone in a corner with their head in their hands," Goetzke says. "That negative image is the stigma that keeps many people with depression

away from treatment."

Goetzke was diagnosed with major depression in her twenties. Now at age 40, she is the founder of the International Foundation for Research and Education for Depression (iFred) located in Charlotte, N.C., an organization dedicated to changing the image of depression and bringing help for depression to those who needs it.

A History of Depression

Like many young women with depression, Goetzke had a family history of depression, suffered through stressful life events, and did a lot of acting out before being diagnosed with major depression. "My father had depression and committed suicide when I was 19. I didn't know what was wrong with me, but I felt I had to 'escape," she says. "My escape took the form of reckless behavior and alcohol abuse. Eventually, I was diagnosed with major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and ADHD."

Goetzke says she's been able to manage her depression through cognitive behavioral therapy (a form of talk therapy), antidepressants, and lifestyle changes, but she still needs to watch out for symptoms of depression — warning signs that might include irritability, being overly tired, loss of interest and energy, isolation, or addictive behavior.

Making Lifestyle Changes to Manage Depression

"I've learned to work closely with my doctors and therapists to find the right treatments at the right time," Goetzke says. Although research shows that a combination of talk therapy and medications works best for treating depression, Goetzke says it's also important to find the right combination of lifestyle changes that best fit each individual. "I had to learn how to deal with stress," she says. "When I went through a divorce, I knew I had to surround myself with loved ones to ease the pain. I also gave up drinking because alcohol is a depressant."

Other lifestyle changes for Goetzke included getting regular exercise, doing yoga, practicing meditation, following a healthy diet, and plenty of prayer. "I'm also a big believer in animal therapy, and I get lots of love from my dog," she says. But perhaps the biggest lifestyle change has been her commitment to change the face of depression.

Kathryn's Future Goals for Depression Understanding

"I'm passionate about helping to remove the stigma from depression and spreading the message that depression isn't hopeless and that treatment does work," she says. "I think of it as changing the 'branding' of depression from negative to positive."

The symbol of iFred is a sunflower, which Goetzke wants to be the image of depression — a hopeful and positive one for people dealing with the condition. To learn more about her foundation's projects and about depression management, or to find support and help for depression, visit the iFred Web site.

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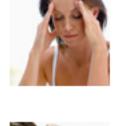
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How to Challenge Negative Thinking

More on Depression Treatment



One of the hallmark symptoms of depression is negative thinking, and it can be tough to reverse this grip on your thought patterns. Try these expert tips to practice more positive thinking.



a vicious cycle; having depression can cause physical pain, and pain can also lead to depression. Find out how to ease ease pain and depression. Help for Seniors With Depression

Depression affects more than 6 million Americans age 65 and older. Although depression is common among this group, it is not a normal part of aging. Learn how to

recognize and treat depression in seniors.

Treating Depression-Related Headaches and Pain Depression and pain are closely related and can create



Tap Into Your Body's Depression Fighters Get your feel-good chemicals going. It's as easy as having a good laugh, nibbling on chocolate, or listening to your favorite music. Discover more ways to boost your body's mood regulators.



Facing the Social Stigma of Depression Are other people's misperceptions about depression holding you back? While a social stigma does exist for mental health conditions, you can help the people in your life understand what depression is really like.

Depression and Feeling Lonely



you can feel lonely. And depression can make you want to isolate yourself even more. Find ways to reconnect with others.

Weight Management Tips for Depression

5 Ways to Make the Most of Talk Therapy

Whether you're by yourself or surrounded by people,



If you're struggling with your weight, consider the relationship between depression, obesity, and weight loss. Try these strategies for maintaining a healthy weight with depression.

To really benefit from your talk therapy sessions, you



need to be an active participant in your depression care. Follow these five steps to improve your depression therapy. Alternative Therapies: Do They Work?

In addition to your regular depression treatment, you may consider trying alternative approaches, such as acupuncture, spiritual healing, or dietary supplements. But how effective are these depression therapies?



Why Am I Depressed? Many people have difficulty pinpointing the cause of their depression. But there may not be a situational trigger. Find out what may be causing your depression.



What If Depression Goes Untreated? When depression is properly treated it can be well

managed. But it's important to follow your doctor's

instructions. Learn how depression treatment can help.



symptoms.

Signs of a Depressive Episode Subtle changes in your emotions can go unnoticed, but they may be the early signs of a recurrence of

depression. Here's how to recognize depression

The risk of relapse looms over many people with

Avoid a Depression Relapse

Adjusting Your Treatment

Coping With Setbacks

and express your feelings.

Depression and Sleep

Handling Depression at Work



diagnosed depression, but there are things you can do to lower your risk. Find out why depression may return.



Here's how depression treatment can change.

not feeling better, you should discuss it with your doctor.

If you're following your treatment plan and you're still



Creative Therapies for Depression

Combined with traditional treatment, drawing, music and other healing arts can help you cope with depression

It's common to have good and bad days when living with

depression. But don't get discouraged. Here's how to overcome setbacks and manage feelings of depression.



Depression's Effect on Appetite



to be concerned about diet changes and depression.

You may have lost your appetite or started emotional eating — both symptoms of depression. Find out when



Depression may disrupt your sleep patterns. And changes to your sleep schedule can also worsen depression. Get tips to help you get a good night's rest.



make it easier to deal with depression at work.

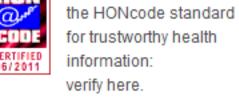
Almost 90 percent of people who have depression say that it has affected their job. Coming up with a plan can



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