

“Bullet Proof” Depression Survival Guide.

10 Survival Tools

Know that your depression will pass. No matter how dark, painful and hopeless the place that you are in at the moment is - **know that it will not be like this forever. You WILL get better**, the sun will shine - and life will be happy, fulfilling and rosy again.

Believe in yourself, your innate sense of self worth, and be aware of the wonderful person that you are, and how valuable you are to your friends, family and community. Most serious depressions however will immediately rob you of this basic, important and valuable belief. **BUT DO NOT be disheartened!** Go directly to 3 below.

Ask a friend, someone you respect and trust to carry the above beliefs for you. Ring them up as often as you need – and ask them to tell you how much they believe in you, and that they are carrying this for you while you have temporarily lost it. Also reassure re 1 above.

Use your network. You ARE worth it. You deserve it. Any real friend will do it for you. **Be ruthless about picking up the phone and calling. It WILL help make you better** and get you through. You may need to add to or change your existing network as you need an absolute minimum of 2, but preferably 3-4 people to rely on. This helps “spread the load” and prevent “friend fatigue” from setting in. Setting this up can be essential for your recovery.

Try and work out what it is that is driving your depression. Is it relationship, job, money, life stage, important, difficult decision making, or past history? **Talk about this long and often with your friends as finding “the driver” of your depression - can remarkably speed up your recovery. You can then begin to make important and necessary changes as needed!**

PROFESSIONAL HELP. Doctors are NOT fully qualified psychiatrists or psychologists. They are generally only a first port of call. Psychiatrists and psychologists etc. vary enormously in quality and value. Be prepared to shop around and chop and change. **Good luck! But remember, when the chips are down, it is YOU, your head, body and heart that are in charge of your life and your decisions about it, NOT some highly paid professional!**

DRUGS. There is a place for use of drugs, **but aim to preferably use these on a temporary basis, and be prepared to start/stop as often as necessary, but of course in consultation with your doctor.** Seek as much different advice as needed and from a range of sources.

BE AWARE THAT BEING DEPRESSED CAN BE EXTREMELY LONELY. Other people will mostly NEVER fully appreciate the lonely, dark and painful place that you are in. Talking to past sufferers can be very helpful in this regard. Locate and ask a fellow sufferer for reassurance.

Making important changes in your life often takes enormous courage and fortitude, and can be both stressful and very anxiety producing. **But the rewards can be huge**, and the predicted “downside” - is most often NEVER as bad as you think!

Last but not least remember Winston Churchill. Never, never, never, never, never,.....

NEVER GIVE UP!!

The Building Blocks of Depression.

Loss of self worth, self esteem, of “place and importance” in family, friends, community and work.

Guilt, shame, self blame. Three of the most crippling building blocks of depression. Then not wanting to go out or be seen in public, and not wanting to “stand up for yourself” in relationships, at work or in the community.

Feeling of transparency... “**That everyone knows”** how useless and depressed you “are”!

Loss of happiness, enjoyment, interest and joy. The tools of hopelessness.

“Off” of food, exercise, sex, playfulness. Not wanting to be with partner, family friends or other people. Difficulty in making decisions.

“BAD” thoughts, thoughts of hopelessness, gloom, self harm or suicide.

Inability to sleep.

1 in 5 people suffer from depression. The building blocks are the same - world wide.

You are not alone!

For bad days, bad times - or when “Starter Motor” won’t crank in the a.m.

Remember, it will pass. Your depression will NOT last forever.

Who can I ring up now for help and encouragement?

Don’t try to solve tomorrow’s problems today. Take life in 5 minute intervals. What do I need to do in the next 30 minutes?

If necessary, make a list. “**Get up, have a shower, clean teeth, make toast etc.**”

Do I need looking after for a while? You are worth it because you are valuable! Ask someone on your network to help.

Write down some key points about how valuable and worthwhile a person you really are. Carry this piece of paper with you in your breast or hip pocket, wallet or handbag. Perhaps a copy of “Bullet proof” Depression Survival Guide as well.

If you can’t sleep, don’t fight it. Get up. Do the dishes. Put wood on the fire. Do some writing. Catch up on some bills, bookwork or do some planning! Watch T.V., video or read. Try sleeping again more towards the dawn ---- and *so what if you are a bit tired next day...join the club!!! You are NOT alone!*

Remember Suicide is a violent, abusive act which hurts and affects lots of innocent people for a long time. Do not do it. There is always someone to turn to. **You are not alone.**

**Tim Barritt. 2009. xxx
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