

A Depression Thread at the Epicurean Philosophy Facebook Page

Post by “Cassius” of January 29, 2022 at 3:39 PM

As is my policy I am not suggesting that anyone here is who not currently on facebook go over there for this thread. However for those of you on Facebook who are interested in the topic of depression, we have this thread currently going on. I approved the general question and then went away and I see there is quite a back and forth. Not a lot of it is productive other than the posts from people who are our regulars, such as Nate and Holly Graves (a regular at Facebook). Just in case someone wants to reference it in the future here is the link. We probably need to take some of Nate's and other good answers and develop more of a thread here:

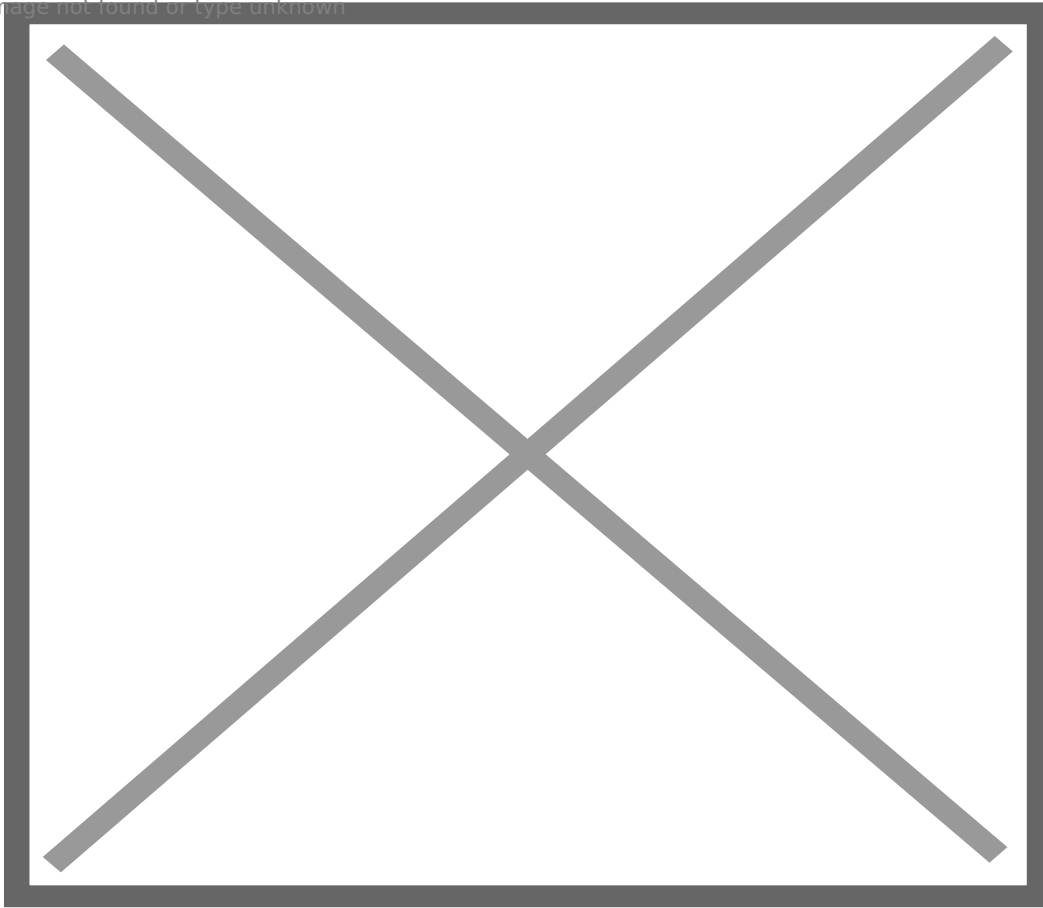
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We don't have a FAQ entry on depression. Should we? If we can develop a good strong answer here we can create a FAQ entry and point it to this thread.

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[Frequently Asked Questions - Epicureanfriends.com](http://www.epicureanfriends.com)

www.epicureanfriends.com

Post by “Matt” of January 29, 2022 at 4:12 PM

Facebook and depression tend to go hand in hand 😊

Post by “Cassius” of January 29, 2022 at 6:02 PM

Yes they do! And that is a large part of the reason so large a number on the Facebook page are so weighted toward Stoicism - they are already so depressed that they are looking for answers anywhere they can find them, and as a result they really aren't interested in the details of the

philosophy beyond that.

Post by “Kalosyni” of January 30, 2022 at 11:52 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

We don't have a FAQ entry on depression. Should we? If we can develop a good strong answer here we can create a FAQ entry and point it to this thread.

I searched online about depression, and the differences between mild depression and major depression. Found some science/medicine based sites...but it was so "depressing" to read, that I can hardly recommend.

Since Epicureans hold science as the favored way of seeing the world, then all we can do is point to modern science, which for moderate and severe levels of depression uses a combination of talk therapy and medication.

The following excerpt is from an article that covers three levels of depression: mild, moderate, and severe:

Quote

Despite the challenges in diagnosis, mild depression is the easiest to treat. Certain lifestyle changes can go a long way in boosting serotonin levels in the brain, which can help fight depressive symptoms.

Helpful lifestyle changes include:

- exercising daily
- adhering to a sleep schedule
- eating a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables
- practicing yoga or meditation
- doing activities that reduce stress, such as journaling, reading, or listening to music

Other treatments for mild depression include alternative remedies, such as St. John's Wort and melatonin supplements. However, supplements can interfere with certain medications. Be sure to ask your doctor before taking any supplements for depression.

A class of antidepressants called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) may be used in some cases. However, these tend to be more effective in people with more severe forms of depression. Recurrent depression tends to respond better to lifestyle changes and forms of talk therapy, such as psychotherapy, than medication.

While medical treatment may not be needed, mild depression won't necessarily go away on its own. In fact, when left alone, mild depression can progress to more severe forms.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/depression/mild-depression>

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Post by “Joshua” of January 30, 2022 at 11:55 AM

Quote

...then all we can do is point to modern science, which for moderate and severe levels of depression uses a combination of talk therapy and medication.

Yes, Kalosyni, I think that is the best and wisest course!

Post by “Kalosyni” of January 30, 2022 at 11:57 AM

Here is a really good article that everyone should read, on the importance of community and mental health, including tips on finding community:

Quote

Mental health heavily influences our quality of life. So it makes sense that mental health, just like physical health, needs to be taken care of and maintained. And one way that it can be maintained is through finding a sense of community.

Community can be defined in many ways, but when simplified down to its most

important element, community is all about connection. Community is not just an entity or a group of people, it's a feeling. It's feeling connected to others, feeling accepted for who you are and feeling supported. Having [connection](#) can help us feel wanted and loved

[The Importance of Community and Mental Health | NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)

Post by “Matt” of January 30, 2022 at 12:01 PM

Yeah if someone feels like they have some sort of clinical mental health issue they need to go to the hospital.

Post by “Kalosyni” of January 30, 2022 at 12:12 PM

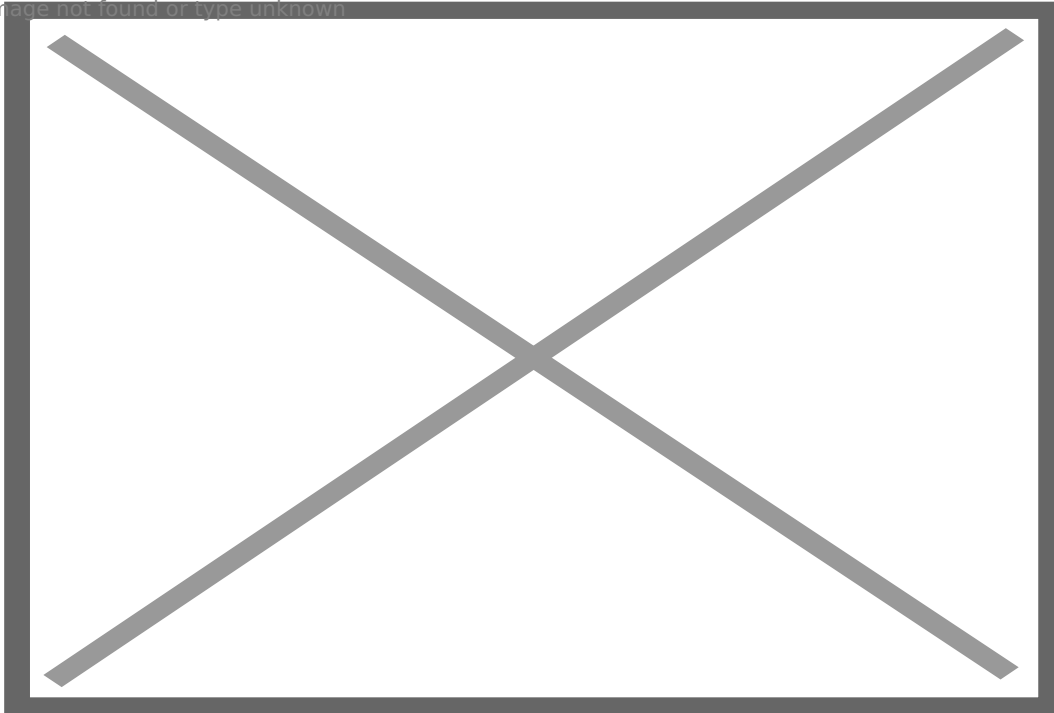
Another good article for people with mild depression:

Quote

The evidence is clear that social isolation increases a person's risk of depression and can make symptoms more severe and longer-lasting. Of course, when you are depressed, socializing is even more difficult. One solution is to join a group devoted to something for which you have a strong passion.

"For instance, volunteering for a favorite cause can keep you connected with others on a regular basis, plus you have the extra motivation to engage because of your personal interest," says Dr. Mehta. Another way is to join a team that plays a sport you like, such as golf, bowling, or tennis.

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[The no-drug approach to mild depression - Harvard Health](#)

While antidepressants can relieve and control symptoms of mild or moderate depression, they are not the only option. Many nondrug options are available to help...

www.health.harvard.edu

Okay! So we need to add an option to "volunteer" here on the forum!

Maybe this: "Volunteer to host an Epicurean Zoom Party"...togas optional (but of course some form of clothing required). 😊

Post by “Marco” of January 30, 2022 at 2:37 PM

About depression:

‘...Nor can one live wisely, honorably, and justly without living pleasantly..’. PD 5

So, someone who is depressed should ask himself: ‘Where was I not living wisely/prudently, not honorably or not justly’ and change that.

Post by “Cassius” of January 30, 2022 at 3:36 PM

[Quote from Marco](#)

About depression:

'...Nor can one live wisely, honorably, and justly without living pleasantly..'. PD 5

So, someone who is depressed should ask himself: 'Where was I not living wisely/prudently, not honorably or not justly' and change that.

Marco (and to comment on recent other points):

I think what we are zeroing in on is that there are multiple causes for depression. Some of those causes are "logical" caused by holding bad premises (worries about the gods, about death, about being confused over the goal of life).

On the other hand there are medical / clinical causes that are beyond the control of "changing your thinking" to help.

The trick is to distinguish between the two: Epicurus has lots to say and lots to help on the first category. On the second category, the prudent thing to do is to figure out that the problem is medical and you need professional help.

And unfortunately often in the case of category two, it's hard to self-diagnose and realize or accept that we need professional help. That's where friends need to use the art of persuasion to the extent possible to encourage outside help.

"So, someone who is depressed should ask himself: 'Where was I not living wisely/prudently, not honorably or not justly' and change that."

So yes, that question needs to be asked, but people need to be ready from the very beginning to realize that their own choices "may" not be the cause of their problems.

Post by "smoothiekiwi" of January 31, 2022 at 11:32 AM

Yes, I agree completely. Philosophy is great for changing your mind, but sometimes its necessary to consult a psychologist. To be fair, I think that any philosopher should also be a psychologist, and every psychologist should also be a philosopher. I see the two areas as inseparably connected.

Post by “Cassius” of January 31, 2022 at 12:20 PM

This is more than a little off topic but that juxtaposition of dual roles reminds me of this line from Paine's "Age of Reason":

Quote

The Bible of the creation is inexhaustible in texts. Every part of science, whether connected with the geometry of the universe, with the systems of animal and vegetable life, or with the properties of inanimate matter, is a text as well for devotion as for philosophy—for gratitude, as for human improvement. It will perhaps be said, that if such a revolution in the system of religion takes place, every preacher ought to be a philosopher. Most certainly, and every house of devotion a school of science.

<http://klymkowskylab.colorado.edu/Readings/Thomas%20Paine%20-%20The%20Age%20of%20Reason.pdf>

Post by “smoothiekiwi” of February 1, 2022 at 12:43 PM

Do you agree or disagree with this quote? 😊

Post by “Cassius” of February 1, 2022 at 1:02 PM

In its poetic aspect I largely agree. But in links to the Bible it skirts close to the line. Paine was a deist and I now consider his whole approach to have been deficient, so his allegory falls flat too.