

PSYCHOLOGY PAPER

ALL SADNESS IS NOT DEPRESSION

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Author Note

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This article is to make people aware about the mental illness and how they can identify symptoms of depression and differentiate it from sadness.

Introduction

Sadness is an intense emotion in persons' life experiences. It is typically characterised by a plethora of feelings like disappointment, loss and failure. Sadness or grief is sometimes described as psychological pain that is accompanied by feeling of loneliness and is characterised by specific behaviour patterns like social withdrawal, slow performance, changes in sleep, fatigue and feeling of worthless or guilt. Some researchers have characterised sadness especially in humans as a constructed emotion (Barrett, 2017) arising from domain- general system of brain, once information from the body and external environment has been contextualised by representations of prior experience. Sadness is a normally experienced emotion that every single person feels in life at some point. It could be temporary phase or if it persists for a longer period, two weeks or more than it might take the form of depression. All around the globe, millions of people experience sadness or grief at least once in a lifetime. Feeling sad is an integral part of depression but the intensity matters. Reasons for grief or sadness differ from person to person and culture to culture.

Depression on the other hand is a mental illness. It can occur in people of any gender or age irrespective of the culture they belong to. Research evidence shows that approximately 280 million people all over the world are suffering from depression every year. Both ICD- 10 and DSM- IV classify clinically important depressive episodes as mild, moderate and severe based on the number, type and severity of symptoms present and degree of functional impairment. In typical depressive episodes of all three variants, the individual usually suffers from depressed mood, loss of interest and reduced energy.

Other common symptoms are:

- Low self esteem
- Sadness
- Pessimistic views about life
- Reduced attention
- Insomnia or disturbed sleep
- Suicidal tendencies or self harm

In some cases, anxiety and other kinds of motor agitation may be more prominent. In severe depressive episodes an individual usually experiences difficulty in continuing social work or domestic activities.

Treatment of depression usually requires medication and psychotherapy. Medication includes selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) a type of antidepressant that increases the level of serotonin in the brain that helps to improve mood and ease the symptoms of depression. Psychotherapy and counselling involves talking to a trained professional. It could be a psychologist, counsellor or specialized therapist who helps the patient with coping techniques and educate them about self-care. It requires patience and long term planning to conduct sessions to work effectively.

Conclusion

Sadness is short term and usually fades away with the pace of life. it is temporary state of grief that eventually becomes irrelevant after some time. Failing in examination, death of the spouse or near one, losing a job are some examples of the sadness invoking triggers. However, an individual finds relief from crying or taking out frustration. Sadness is a part of depression. It is disengagement from the normal life for a short time period. It elicits care and compassion for self that is a psychological development. For instance, Colleen Saffrey and colleagues (2008) found that people often value regret as beneficial learning opportunity. Sadness is a healthy emotion until it interferes with your ability to function normally. Use it as a mode of protection from mental illness.

References

Colleen Saffrey, Amy Summerville (2008) Motivation and emotion 32, 46-54

Bellack, Alan S. And Hersen, M. (1998) Comprehensive Clinical Psychology vol. 6