

# Depressed? Counseling can help

Psychological counseling has been shown to be effective in treating depression.

## What is psychological counseling?

Counseling, or therapy, is talking to a mental health professional at regular visits. In these visits, you will learn ways to:

- Cope with problems, from minor to severe
- Manage your emotions
- Improve your relationships
- Recover from depression and keep it from coming back

If your depression is severe, your doctor may want you to go to counseling *and* take antidepressants.

## What can you do to help your treatment?

For counseling to work, you have to be willing to talk and listen. Your counselor will do the same. Your counselor is not there to judge you. He or she will help identify thought patterns that are negative and help direct you to positive change.

### Make sure you:

- Go to all of your scheduled counseling visits.
- Ask questions. Be honest and open about how you feel.

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- Complete tasks assigned to you as part of the therapy.
- Keep seeing your primary care doctor. Tell him or her if you're feeling better or worse.

## What to expect

More than half of people with mild to moderate depression respond well to counseling.

Most counseling sessions last about an hour. People with depression typically go to one session a week for 8 to 20 weeks.

If you are not improving after 6 to 12 weeks, you may need to try a different treatment.

## Choose what works for you

No matter what, in counseling, you have to be comfortable. So, choose the type of therapy that would work best for you.

- **Individual** — just you and a counselor
- **Group** — you, a counselor and other people with similar problems
- **Family** — you, other people in your family, and a counselor

Your doctor can help you decide.

Feeling better mentally often helps you feel better physically. You may find it hard to talk to a counselor at first. That's okay. But stick with it and be patient. Give yourself time to feel better.

