

DEPRESSION THAT DOESN'T GET BETTER

Dear Dr. K.,

I've had depression that goes back many years. Although I've received many hours of counseling and a variety of antidepressants, I haven't gotten much better. Depression runs in my family. Any suggestions?

Linda in Northport

Dear Linda,

Although many people have bouts of depression or the 'blues', these periods usually don't last too long nor do they really get in the way of daily living. I am presuming that you feel constantly overwhelmed, are sad, can't concentrate, may withdraw from life, have no energy, don't enjoy things and can be short-tempered and that these symptoms interfere with your daily life.

Not infrequently, people who have been treated with a variety of antidepressants (and this is assuming both an adequate dosing of the medicines and length of time to see if they work) and not had relief have been found to have a diagnosis of Bipolar II Disorder. This is not typical bipolar or manic-depression but a form of it where persons have repeated depressions and have had times when they also have felt energized and been very active. Since the depression is the more frequent symptom, the energetic time gets placed in the background. Typically, the person, like you, has had trials of several antidepressant medications, singly and in combinations) without their being of much help. Also, there can be a history of bipolar disorder (manic-depression) in the family or if this isn't the case, a family member who is very active and energetic and successful. In women, there may be a history of post partum depression after her children were born. There may also be a history of substance abuse, especially alcohol with the idea being that the person was depressed and 'self-medication' with the alcohol.

An alternative to investigate besides Bipolar II Disorder is Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Frequently, there is someone in the family with this diagnosis. Adults with ADD often have depression and they also do not respond well to typical antidepressant medications. Medications that may help with Bipolar II Disorder depression include Lamictal, Lithium, Seroquel, Depakote or Abilify. With an ADD diagnosis, medicines to treat the ADD might first be tried with the mood sometimes improving and eliminating the need for an antidepressant. I hope this information helps.

Dr. K

Dr. K is Stan Kapuchinski, M.D., a board-certified psychiatrist still practicing in Punta Gorda, FL. For an appointment or if you have questions, please email him at DrK@StopYourMisery.com. Dr. K.'s book, ***Say Goodbye To Your PDI (Personality Disordered Individual), Recognize People Who Make You Miserable and Eliminate Them From Your Life for Good!*** is available at Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble Booksellers, and HCI Books. Visit his website: www.StopYourMisery.com
