Difficulties with Depression

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Presentation Overview

- What does depression feel like?
- Understanding depression
- Diagnostic criteria
- Causes of depression
- Assessment of depression
- Interventions
- Treatment
  - Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)
  - Interpersonal Therapy
- Case study and discussion
What does depression feel like?

Depression steals away whoever you were, prevents you from seeing who you might someday be, and replaces your life with a hole.”

“when you are in it, there is no empathy, no intellect, no imagination, no compassion, no humanity, and no hope”

“it is like dying from thirst while looking at a glass of water just beyond one’s reach.”

Understanding Depression

- Very common (modern epidemic)
- Greatest increases amongst young people
- Emotional cognitive and physical state that is long-lasting
- Whilst depression and sadness after bereavement can result in similar “symptoms”, depression is a persistent problem that goes beyond what is considered “normal” within one’s culture as a response to loss
- Related to changes in societal family structure
- Early emotional stress affect neuron development
- Depression often robs a person from finding meaning
- Inhibits personal growth
Diagnostic Criteria

- Depressed mood as indicated by either subjective report, or observation made by others
- Diminished interest in most activities
- Weight loss or weight gain, or a decrease or increase in appetite
- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness, or excessive or inappropriate guilt
- Diminished ability to think or concentrate, or indecisiveness
- Recurrent thoughts of death, recurrent suicidal ideation with or without a specific plan, or a suicide attempt

Causes
Assessment of Depression

In order to fully understand the impact of depression, it is important to consider:

- recent stressors
- range of symptoms
- current level of functioning
- medications
- history
- family situation
- available supports & resources
Interventions

PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENTS
- Promote coping
- Resolve life stress (family conflict, interpersonal conflict, recent loss and disappointments)
- Decrease anxiety

DRUG TREATMENTS
- Change brain chemicals (serotonin, noradrenaline, dopamine)
- Brain effects (improve sleep, improve concentration, increase energy, better mood, decrease anxiety)

STOP DRUGS AND ALCOHOL
Treatment - CBT

• The way we think effects how we respond
• Identify negative thinking and response
• Challenge unhelpful beliefs-cognitive distortions
• Replace irrational thoughts with constructive ones
• Testing alternative thoughts and measuring emotional/behavioural response
• Used in conjunction with:
  – Relaxation & breathing techniques, thought stopping, distraction, social skills training
Treatment – Interpersonal

- Based on psychodynamic principals
- How depression is maintained by current relationships and social context
- Diagnose, goals, educate, coping strategies, short term
- Manages 4 interpersonal problem areas:
  - Unresolved grief
  - Role disputes
  - Roles transitions
  - Interpersonal deficits
Finding the right treatment

• Each individual is completely different – what works best for one may not be what works best for another.

• Good communication between client and health professional is vital – if something is not working for the client, then it is very important that they feel comfortable enough to communicate this so that the treatment can be amended to something more suitable for them.

• For some, a combination of psychological and medical treatments will work best whilst for others, one or the other will be preferred. It is important to give choices.