

The Art and Science of Healing Depression

By Drs. Cheryl and Sam Yanuck

Many people who feel depressed also experience other subtle declines in health that contribute to their depression. If your depression has not resolved despite taking appropriate medication, it's important to figure out if other factors are causing or contributing to your depression.

Depression is a common affliction, affecting 10-20 percent of the population over a lifetime. Only about 40 percent of patients have a full response to antidepressant medications, leaving the majority with at least some level of residual symptoms. What can we do to help the rest of the people who suffer from depression? What other ways can people get over depression besides or in addition to taking antidepressants?

In evaluating a patient with depression, both Drs. Cheryl and Samuel Yanuck start by assessing the total picture of the patient's health, with particular emphasis on understanding ways in which changes in your brain and/or body could be triggering your depression. The first question to ask is whether you also have fatigue. A combination of depression and fatigue can indicate declines in brain function that are causing both the depression and the fatigue. If you get tired while doing mental activity, like driving, reading, or working on the computer, this may be an especially important factor in your depression.

ASSESSING SYMPTOMS

We also assess other potentially important factors. A detailed history includes an assessment of symptoms related to your brain chemistry, dietary factors related to the health of your brain, hormone imbalances, blood sugar problems, circulation of blood to the brain, inflammatory processes, dysregulation of sleep and circadian rhythm, and other factors.

What these factors have in common is that they all have the potential to affect the way your brain functions. If your brain is not functioning well, it can cause depression. Your brain cells are like Christmas tree lights. When your brain cells are lit up like a Christmas tree, you feel good. When your brain cells are dimmed down, you can be depressed. All of the factors mentioned above can dim the lights of your Christmas tree, making you feel depressed or even fatigued. Changing the health of your brain can be of primary importance in helping you overcome depression.



Dr. Sam Yanuck and Dr. Cheryl Yanuck

Some people recognize that their life circumstances are pretty good, but they feel depressed anyway. If this is the case for you, it's likely you'll feel much better when your brain function is improved.

BRAIN HEALTH

But there are also people whose depression is rooted in difficult circumstances or experiences, either currently or in the past. In these cases, the depression may not be primarily about the biology of the brain, but impairments in brain health may be keeping you from functioning as well as you could, as you work on the emotional issues that are the basis of your depression. If this is the case for you, having healthy brain function is also essential, to give you better brain function with which to engage the emotional work.

In appropriate cases, patients consult with Dr. Cheryl Yanuck to identify psychological factors that are keeping them in a state of anxiety or depression. Dr. Yanuck's work involves several methods that can be applied individually or in combinations, to meet each patient's unique needs. Some methods engage you in exploration of your emotional content, while others are designed to release the linkages between your emotions and the physical stresses they create. This allows you to have your emotions without paying a price for them in your body.

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In appropriate cases, patients consult with Dr. Sam Yanuck to identify neurological factors that may be involved in persistent depression or fatigue. This is especially appropriate in patients who have had one or more concussions during their lifetimes, or those for whom fatigue is a primary concern. Though a head injury may have occurred long ago, the effect of a damaging event may only emerge many years later. Once the process of decline becomes apparent, it is essential to take action to slow down the loss of function as much as possible, so that you can avoid memory loss and other declines in cognitive function, and maintain your ability to function well as you age.

If your depression has not responded completely to antidepressant medications and you're interested in exploring other options, we encourage you to call the Yanuck Center for Life and Health. [hkh](http://www.yanuckcenter.com)

Samuel F. Yanuck, DC, FACFN, FLAMA treats patients from all over the U.S. He also teaches functional medicine principles to both doctors and medical students. Dr. Yanuck uses a broad range of clinical tools to help people in all stages of health and illness. His approach integrates neurology, immunology, body chemistry, nutrition, lab analysis, chiropractic, acupuncture, and other methods into a single working process. Dr. Yanuck is a Fellow of the American College of Functional Neurology, and a Fellow of the International Academy of Medical Acupuncture.

Cheryl Yanuck, MD, is a psychiatrist who works with adults and older adolescents. She uses a variety of psychotherapy techniques as indicated for each individual patient. She has received years of advanced training in the treatment of trauma and dissociation. Dr. Yanuck uses Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), a technique designed specifically to overcome the effects of trauma. She integrates EMDR with ego state therapies such as Developmental Needs Meeting Strategy (DNMS) and Internal Family Systems Therapy (IFS). These techniques focus on finding and freeing up compassionate parts of self that can help wounded child parts to heal. In addition, Dr. Yanuck uses elements of supportive psychotherapy, insight-oriented psychotherapy, cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy, interpersonal psychotherapy, art therapy, and guided imagery.

On the biological side, Dr. Yanuck is skilled at prescribing psychiatric medications and, in appropriate cases, incorporates nutritional supplements into the regimens she prescribes. Relaxation techniques and other mind-body techniques are also recommended when appropriate.

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