

Sources of Depression

By

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Many people have heard the different names for specific types of depression such as: Major Depressive Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, Dysthymic Disorder, and many others. This article will briefly discuss the sources of depression leading to those diagnoses.

Exogenous Depression - This is a depression that develops from without, or originates externally from the person. It is due to events or situations that normally would lead one to feel depressed. These events may be significant losses such as a death or illness in the family, or the loss of a job. Many other stressors that occur outside of the individual may lead to depressive symptoms.

Endogenous Depression - This is depression that develops from within, or originates internally. Thus, an individual's life may be going well financially, or in terms of relationships, or employment, and despite those positive life circumstances, the individual develops a significant and sometimes debilitating depression that requires treatment. An interesting point is that when MRI's and Cat-Scans are made of the brains of people experiencing either exogenous or endogenous depression, the readings are very similar. That is, the brain activity is very similar. Often people who experience endogenous depression will have a family history of depression, with nuclear or extended family members for generations all experiencing depression of this nature to some degree. Most people are aware of family histories of cancer or other diseases that lead family members to be more likely to have those diseases. Similarly with Endogenous Depression, family members may be more likely to experience the chemical imbalances in the brain that result in the symptoms of depression if there is a family history of depression.

Exogenous and Endogenous – Of course, one may experience depression caused by Exogenous and Endogenous source events occurring at the same time.

Treatment - Effective treatment is available through a combination of counseling and appropriately prescribed medications. The most effective treatment occurs when there is a collaborative and cooperative treatment team including the client, the therapist, the family physician, and, in some cases, trusted family members or significant others.

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