

Hello, class. So in today's lesson, we're going to be talking about mood disorders. And we're going to focus specifically on depressive disorders. But first, remember mood disorders or any kind of psychological disorder that are marked by major changes in a person's mood or emotion. And these changes in mood or emotion can affect a person's thoughts and behaviors as a result.

So there are two general types of mood that we're talking about here. Either a person can feel very good. They can have very high emotion or affect, which is what we call mania. Or they can have very low affect or emotion. They can feel very down. And that's what we call depression. So again, we're going to focus specifically on that depressive aspect for today.

Depressive disorders, or any kind of mood disorders, that occur in the absence of manic episode, so there's no mania, where a person displays long periods of symptoms like reduced activity, lack of enjoyment in other activities, feelings of loneliness and hopelessness. So these are specific symptoms that tell us that depression is occurring.

Now depression is one of the most common psychological disorders, which is to say something like over 19 million people experience depression in some form. Also depression often occurs with other psychological disorders. And sometimes it can actually be a symptom of another one.

For example, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, or it can also be any kind of natural reaction to a life event, especially something very negative or stressful for a person.

Now depression is different from just feeling very sad or down, in that it occurs for long periods of time. And we're talking about from weeks all the way up to multiple years of feeling the specific kind of depression. It's also important to note that depression isn't necessarily sadness. Oftentimes we use those two synonymously.

But depression is a little bit more akin to feeling a lack of something, which is to say it's feelings of hopelessness and not getting any kind of joy or happiness out of things. In other words, it's a bit more like emptiness. Whereas sadness is more of an emotion that you're actually feeling. It's a lack of emotional almost.

And depression can often affect a person's behavior. If a person is depressed, they can have trouble sleeping. They can have a lack of eating. They don't eat as much and they lose weight. They can withdraw from others. And oftentimes they can display poor performance at work or at school.

So there are two major types of depressive disorders that we're going to talk about today. The first one, as sounds about appropriate, would be Major Depressive Disorder. Major Depressive Disorder is sort of a pure depressive

disorder, which is to say a person experiences depression for a period of at least two weeks in length. Again, we're talking about a longer period of time of feeling this. Not just a day or two.

And it's also important we say pure because it's not caused by any kind of substances. Things like drugs that they might be taking. It's not caused by any kind of bereavement, which is to say there isn't a death in the family, or something like that, which actually causes the depression to occur. And it's also not accounted for by any other kind of psychological disorder. So the person isn't diagnosed with something else, like say schizophrenia. And persons often, when they have Major Depressive Disorder, have reoccurring thoughts of death and of suicide.

So this can be an incredibly dangerous one in terms of the behavioral component of it and the effect that it can have. In fact 60% of people that commit suicide are depressed in some form. So it's definitely something to recognize and to treat as soon as possible.

On the other hand, Dysthymic Disorder is a form of depression that isn't necessarily as severe as Major Depressive Disorder, which is to say the symptoms the person is displaying aren't quite as extreme or as major or as problematic for the person. Although it is still a problem obviously. And it can impair their functions.

And, especially in Dysthymic Disorder, these symptoms occur for an even longer period of time. We're talking about for most of the time, they need to be occurring for two years in length or longer. So you see this is a very long-occurring one. And because of that length, this can lead to some very severe problems in a person's life where they withdraw and they don't have social support from other people. Or they constantly have feelings of worthlessness or loneliness. So you can see just because the symptoms are not as severe and they're not necessarily having all of these suicidal thoughts or these problems that require hospitalization, it still has a huge effect on a person's life because of that longer period of time.

Finally treatment for depressive disorders can vary very widely. There are a lot of different treatment types that people will experiment with, especially considering the prevalence of this disorder. But the two major ones we'll focus on are drugs and psychotherapy.

So when we're talking about drugs, this is a really well-known treatment for depression. We have things like antidepressants like Prozac or Zoloft that have entered common speech. So it's something you probably heard of before this class as well.

In general, a lot of antidepressant drugs have gotten a lot better, especially with what we call SSRIs, or selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors, which are a newer type of drug. And they have less serious side effects than things like MAO inhibitors or tricyclic antidepressants, which are classically being used. So our drugs have gotten better and they have less side effects on the person as well.

However, psychotherapy has proven to be very effective in the treatment of things like Dysthymic Disorder on its own. And it's even more effective with Major Depressive Disorder and with other types of depressive disorders when we use both of these in conjunction. So just using drugs or just using psychotherapy isn't necessarily the most effective. It's when we put them together that we receive the best outcome for patients with these types of disorders.