
Press Information

Psychotherapeutical treatment of Depression

8th European Depression Day – Press Conference on 21st of September 2011 in Berlin, Germany

Berlin (Germany) 21st of September 2011 – Depression is a pathological disorder/disease of a person's affectivity. It is associated with an observable, describable symptomatology. Furthermore, depression is characterized by emotional and/or external pre-depressive events and burdens. In many cases, a depressive personality structure (typus melancholicus or depressive personal characteristics) and depressive behaviours (withdrawal, negativism) are part of the disease.

Depressive episodes arise from different bases. The failure of achieving one's life plans, for example the typical male concept of life as the „strong breadwinner, a situation of personal loss (e.g. losing a partner), the loss of one's self perception and outside image as well as feelings of helplessness and powerlessness of the own ego can be the cause of a depressive episode.

Here, psychodynamics are of specific importance: Our knowledge of "Psychodynamics" is central to our understanding of events which are occurring within the inner-mind and their interrelationship with internal and external factors of a person's environment.

Psychodynamics is the description of inner-mind processes, which form the background of healthy and unhealthy experiences and behaviour. It is derived from the theory of personality and disorder from psychoanalysis and depth psychology.

Important aspects of depression from the perspective of psychodynamics:

- strong need for attention ("orality"), symbiotical relationship
- lack of confidence or unstable self-confidence (narcissistic disorder), increased vulnerability of self-esteem
- Ego-Insufficiency, negative self-perception, not achieving own or internalised ideals of one's own person, attitude of helplessness
- strict, rigid orientation on norms and performance (strict Superego, inability to change positions)
- hopelessness, lack of development and future prospects and suicidality
- avoiding aggression, being unable to seize opportunities, indirect aggression, demands on one's environment

- feeling of guilt, sense of failure, self-accusation and accusing others
- "mental pain" as inner pressure or tension which must be overcome, suicidality
- feelings of shame (failing on Ego-ideal)

Helping with psychotherapeutical treatment options

Today, psychotherapeutical treatment is a standard part of the therapeutical work with people suffering from depression. For mild depression, the first step is a conversation with a doctor. For people who are suffering from moderate or severe depression, the best treatment method is a combination of psychotherapy and psychopharmacotherapy. Approved methods are:

- Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy
- Psycho-dynamical Psychotherapy (Depth psychological)
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Interpersonal Psychotherapy
- Client-centered conversational Psychotherapy (scientific client-centred Psychotherapy)
- Family Therapy

Acute and long-term therapies can be offered. Usually, an acute therapy lasts from eight to twelve months. Therapeutic methods are: antidepressants, anxiolytics, hypnotics, atypical neuroleptics as well as psychotherapy, psycho-education, working with relatives. Furthermore, ergo-therapy, performance diagnostics, cognitive therapy, creative therapy and sports- and movement-therapy, socio-therapy, social work, and rehabilitative treatment options and self-help groups are used.

A long-term therapy has different clinical aspects: administration of antipsychotic drugs (relapse prevention and prevention of further impairment), long-term supervision: psychotherapy, psycho-education (relatives, patients), ability to work: assessing the ability to work under pressure, general ability to work, staged vocational rehabilitation as well as rehabilitation in the real sense with chronic depression with clear minus symptoms (continuing reduction of drive and performance). Furthermore, the situation of relatives and families and also self-help concepts are included in a long-term-therapy.

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