Down in the Dumps [1]

Week of:
Jun 14, 2019

Depressed and shy: Finding the courage to get help [2]

Hi Alice,

I have been struggling with debilitating depression for ten years. I am finally realizing that I need help, but I'm finding it difficult to get the courage. I am very shy as well. What do you say when you call a psychiatrist or a psychologist's office? "Hi, I'm really messed up and I have no idea how this works. Do I make an appointment or what?" I'm really nervous about making the call, and what kind of questions will be asked during that first conversation. This is not an easy or comfortable topic for me to discuss, and I would have no clue about what to say after "hello." Any words you could offer would be of great help.

Thanks very much,
Worried & Confused

Read more [2]

Are antidepressants ruining our sex life? [3]

Dear Alice,

My question is this... my boyfriend and I have been together a little while and what started out as an exciting sexual relationship came to a crashing halt when he was diagnosed with a mild depression due to losing his job, moving, divorce, etc. He was prescribed Effexor — a mild antidepressant/anxiety reliever that he claims has reduced his sexual drive to ZERO. He says he's very tired (he is) and is supposed to be on this stuff for a year. Can this medication do this to him? He says that it has to bother him more than it bothers me!! I feel lonely and beginning to think it's just an excuse to keep some distance between us. He says he loves me every day, is very affectionate and loving — but I hate this and don't know what to do.

Thanks, Alice,
Read more [3]


Dear Alice,

This is more of a coping question. I am a first-year who applied for a single room over the summer and was denied. I figured that everything would be okay nevertheless. I tried to look at the situation as a character-builder. Well, that is not the case. My roommate is very depressed. I talked to the RA on my floor, but she didn't take any action, except to talk with her. Unfortunately, my roommate is so ashamed of what's happening that she denied the facts, and the RA believed her. No one except me has realized yet that she is sleeping most of the day and all of the night, and that it is indeed a real problem. I have expressed my concern to her and encouraged her to go to counseling services. She went a couple of times and then started canceling appointments left and right. I have worried about her, but I have no backup whatsoever, so there is really nothing I can do to help at this point. We get along relatively well otherwise.

Right now, the concern I have is that her depression is pulling me down, too. I literally have not been alone anywhere for more than two to three minutes in weeks. I wanted a single because it's a requirement that I spend some time by myself, and I'm going crazy these days. The lights are always out in the room, and I've noticed that I'm sleeping more than usual myself as the situation has progressed. Also, I am having to deal with some personal issues of my own this semester, and I simply don't have the energy to take care of someone else who desperately wishes that I would do so. Any ideas would be greatly appreciated.

— Wish I Were a Loner

Read more [4]

Friend is depressed — How to help? [5]

Dear Alice,

I am actually asking for a friend of mine since this situation is getting worse, and I don't know how to help. The problem is that my friend is very depressed, and has very, very low self-esteem. While sometimes able to be cheerful and "happy," he claims to rarely feel that way and mostly just hates himself. He has mentioned suicide, although I think this is more an expression of the extreme self-hatred he feels than anything. I comfort him and often tell him how wonderful he is — what a good person, good qualities, etc., but I suspect he does not believe me at all. This has been going on for a long time now, and I think it stems from a somewhat unhappy childhood and adolescence. I don't know how to help him and I don't know what to do. I feel like being strong for him is just not enough, and I can't quite convince him that counseling may do some good. It
seems to me that, recently, he has been feeling even worse about himself, to the point where nothing will comfort him. He cannot afford counseling, and he has no health insurance. Is there anything you can suggest for me to tell him or suggest to him? Any help will be greatly appreciated, because I just don't how to help him. Thank you so much.

— A friend on-the-line

Read more [5]

Depression after one night stand [6]

Dear Alice,

Recently I had my first one night stand. It happened with a guy at a club and it happened very fast without us getting to know each other too much first. The problem is, the next day I felt extremely sad and depressed. I felt like I've been used and felt cheap. I was also sad that he didn't ask me for my phone number even though I wasn't interested in him. I felt unattractive and worthless. Is it normal to feel this way? Do guys ever feel this way too? How can I get over this post-one-night-stand depression?

Read more [6]