

Mood Disorders

- Characterized by emotional extremes
- Prolonged, disabling disruptions in emotional state
- Note than functioning is almost always severely impaired

Depression

- The "common cold" of psychological disorders
- Less frequent than phobias, but more debilitating
- Depression is a normal response to loss
- Psychological Hibernation – time to slow down, evaluate, redirect energies, and adapt
- Major depressive disorder is maladaptive
- Maladaptive – not providing adequate or appropriate adjustment to the environment or situation
- Major Depressive Disorder – disorder in which a person, for no rational reason, experiences persistent depressed moods, feelings of worthlessness, and diminished interest or pleasure in most activities
- Depression is always accompanied by negative thoughts
- Often accompanied by anxiety and/or substance abuse
- Women's risk of depression is double that of men's
- Depression rates are ballooning, especially in young
- More common in western than eastern cultures

The Biological Perspective

- Genes:
 - Family members are at a higher risk, especially identical twins
 - Many genes with small, combined effects
- Brain:
 - Biochemical events in the brain
 - Low norepinephrine (alertness)=depression
 - High norepinephrine=mania
 - Smoking raises norepinephrine levels
 - Low serotonin=depression
 - Repetitive physical exercise raises serotonin levels
 - Reduces overall neural activity

Social-Cognitive Perspective

- Self-defeating beliefs
 - Negative thoughts about self, situation, and future feed negative moods
 - Negative attributions
 - Magnification: "this will never end"
 - Overgeneralization: "this will affect my whole life and others"

Depression as a Combination of All Three

- Brain Chemistry → Cognition → Mood → Brain Chemistry → Cognition...
 - Altering any one component of the chemistry-cognition-mood circuit

Types of Mood Disorders

- Manic Episodes – hyperactive, elated, wildly irrational, optimistic, or irritable state
 - Reckless investments, spending sprees, unsafe sex
 - What goes up, must come down...
- Bipolar Disorder – mood disorder that alternates between states of depression and mania
 - Formerly called manic-depressive disorder
 - Some of the many famous creative people had bipolar disorder
 - Woolf, Hemingway, Poe, London, Van Gogh, Pollock, etc.

Causes of Mood Disorders

- Learning – theories link depression to learned helplessness
- Cognitive – theories see depression as the result of distorted, illogical thinking
- Biological – explanations of mood disorders look at the function of serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine systems in the brain