



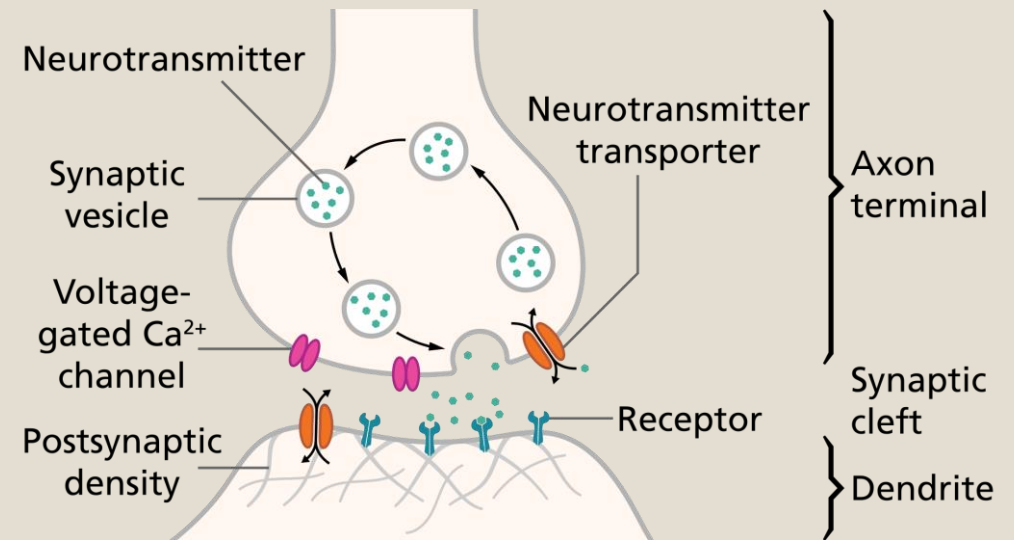
# “ ASKING FOR A FRIEND...”

*NAVIGATING EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND  
BUILDING RESILIENCE*

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# Let's start with a little biology

- **Neurotransmitters** are the chemicals that carry excitation or inhibition signals from one nerve to the next in the brain.
- These include **serotonin, dopamine, norepinephrine, and epinephrine.**



# Serotonin

- Regulates:
  - Sleep
  - Appetite
  - Mood
  - Inhibits pain



# Dopamine



- Essential to movement
- Reward system in the brain
- Influences motivation
- Perception of reality

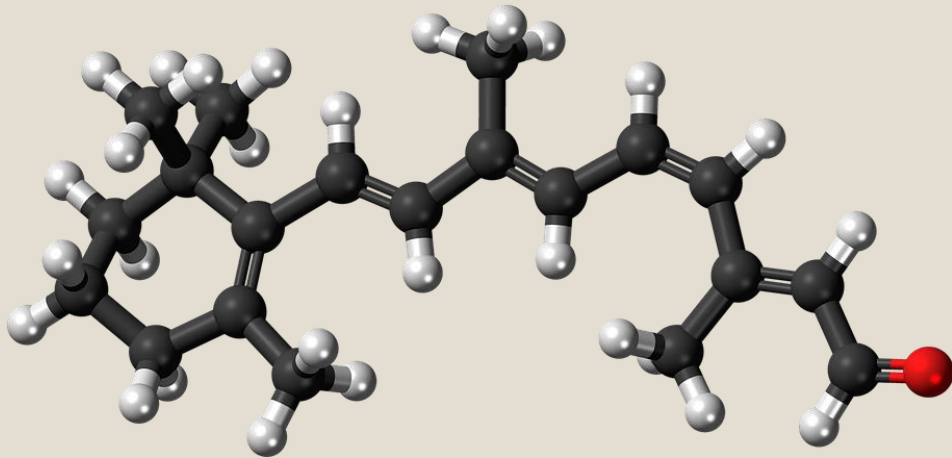


# Norepinephrine

- Fight or flight
- Motivation
- Reward
- Can trigger anxiety

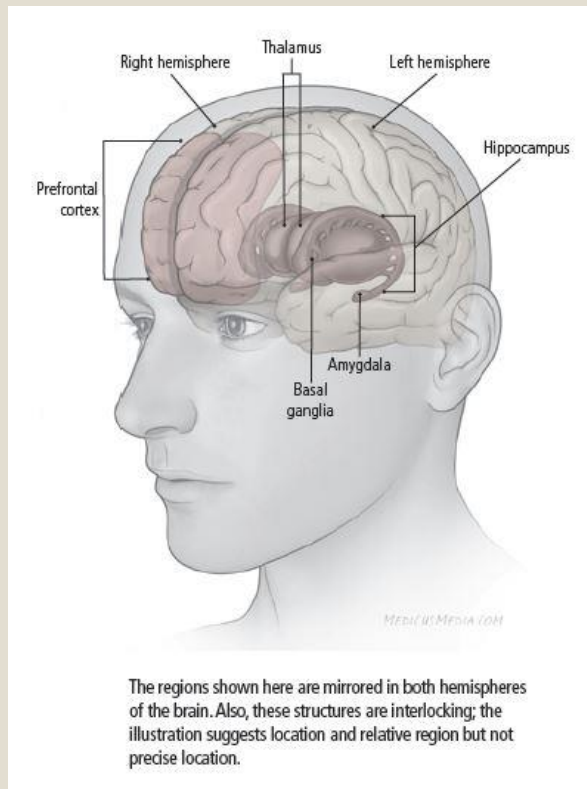


# Other neurotransmitters



- Acetylcholine
  - Enhances memory
  - Learning and recall
  - Regulates movement
- Glutamate
  - Excitatory
  - Role in bipolar disorder and schizophrenia
- Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA)
  - Inhibitory
  - Quells anxiety

# Where do these neurotransmitters work in the brain?



- **Amygdala**
  - Emotions such as anger, pleasure, sorrow, fear and sexual arousal
  - Activated when someone recalls emotionally charged memories
- **Thalamus**
  - Receives sensory information and relays it to the appropriate place in the cerebral cortex
  - Cortex is responsible for speech, behavioral reactions, movement, thinking and learning
- **Hippocampus**
  - Communicates with the amygdala, and is responsible for long term memory and recollection
  - “Once bitten, twice shy” – recalls emotional and physical response to past trauma when faced with it again
  - Smaller in some depressed people, perhaps due to chronic exposure to stress hormones

# So what causes depression?

The answer is complicated and many factors contribute to it.

- **Trauma** – Trauma at an early age changes how the brain responds to fear and stress
- **Genetics** – Mood disorders tend to run in families, and life factors and events shape how that manifests
- **Life circumstances** – Death, divorce, financial stress, social isolation, chronic stress
- **Brain structure** – Changes in how certain areas of the brain respond to neurotransmitters
- **Medical conditions** – Sleep disorders, chronic illness, chronic pain, anxiety, ADHD
- **Substance abuse** – Hijacks the dopamine reward system

*All of these lead to changes in your brain chemistry that result in physical symptoms.*



# The mud puddle principle



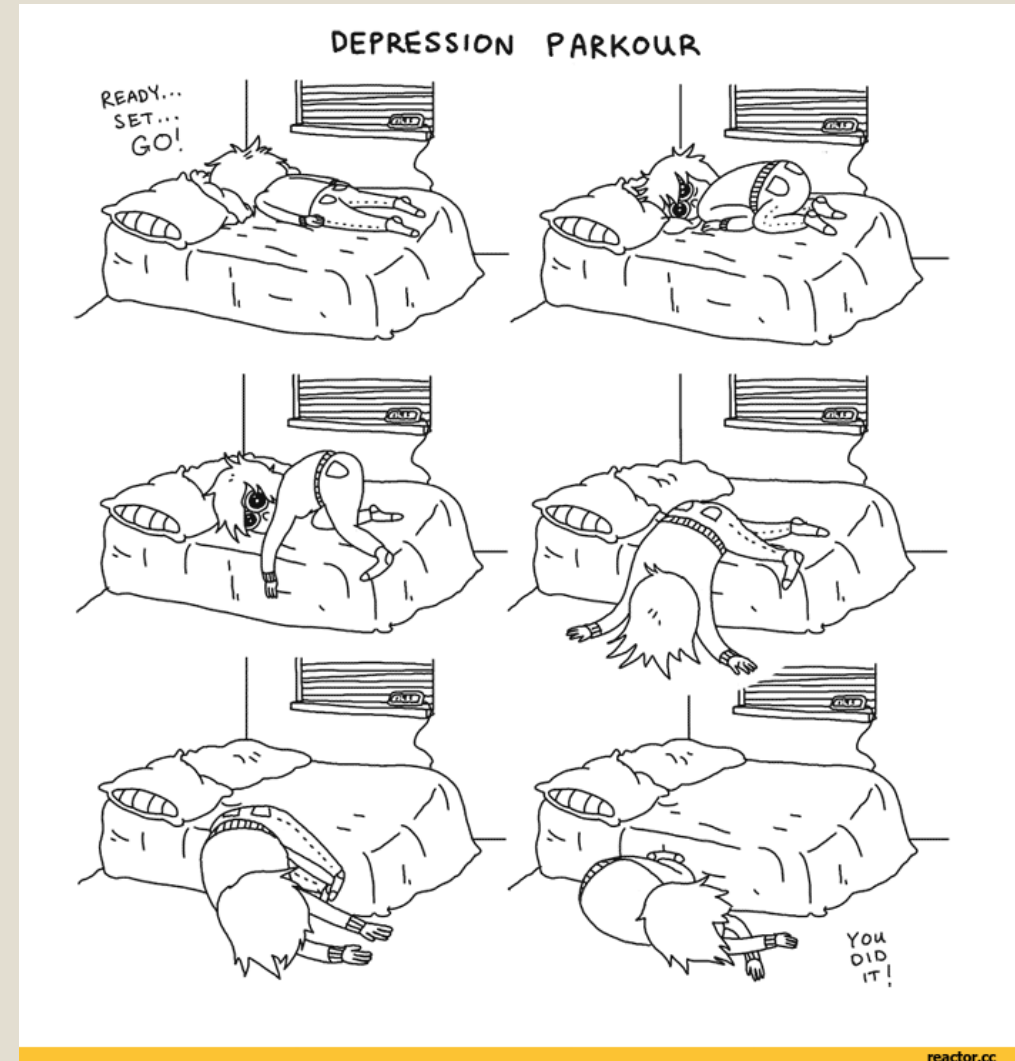
# How do I know if I'm depressed?

- More than just feeling sad or going through a rough patch – symptoms must last longer than 2 weeks
- Trouble rebounding from episodes of emotional distress
- Other health problems that can mimic depression need to be ruled out
- Women and young adults are at higher risk of experiencing depression
- Some people only have one episode, but most people who experience depression have more than one episode
- 16 million Americans had at least one major depressive episode last year



# Symptoms

- Sleep
- Interest
- Guilt
- Energy
- Concentration
- Appetite
- Changes in movement
- Suicidal Ideation



reactor.cc

## *Symptoms of Depression*

### **EMOTIONS:**

Sadness  
Anxiety  
Hopelessness/Helplessness  
Guilt  
Anger  
Mood swings  
Irritability

### **PHYSICAL:**

Substance abuse  
Unexplained aches and pain  
Sleep disturbances  
Loss of motivation  
Weight gain or loss  
Chronic fatigue  
Low energy

### **THOUGHTS:**

Frequent self criticism  
Impaired memory and concentration  
Indecisiveness  
Confusion  
Thoughts of death and suicide

### **BEHAVIOR:**

Crying  
Withdrawal from people and duties  
Moving more slowly  
Being agitated or unable to settle  
Changes in appearance

# Physical symptoms

## **Our bodies feel things that our head doesn't recognize:**

- Chronic muscle pain
- Backaches
- Frequent headaches
- Abdominal pain
- Chest pain
- Digestive disturbances
- Exhaustion and fatigue
- Sleep disturbances
- Changes in weight



# Special populations

## ◦ **Children and teens**

- More likely to complain of aches and pains than to say they are depressed
- Impulsive – more likely to attempt suicide if they are feeling really down, so pay attention and take any mention seriously
- May become aggressive, engage in risky behavior, abuse drugs and alcohol
- Watch for decline in school performance
- Social isolation, loss of interest

## ◦ **Seniors**

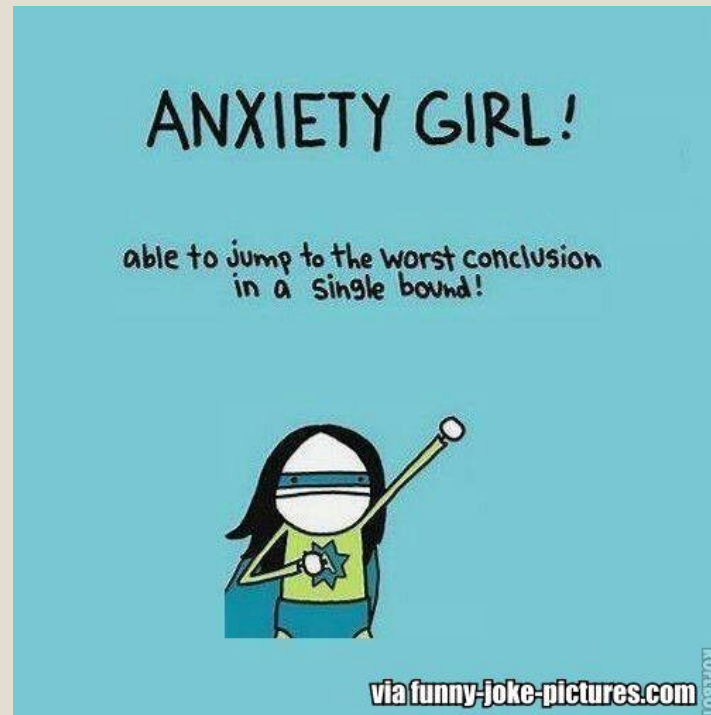
- Significant risk factors include social isolation, medically fragile, grief
- More likely to complete suicide attempts
- May manifest with cognitive decline and memory problems
- Monitor for poor health management
- Be concerned if you notice increasing isolation



# Anxiety

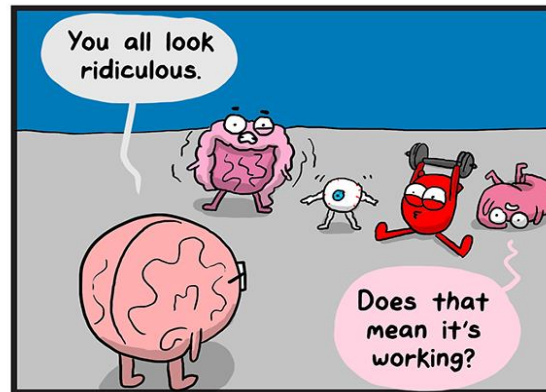
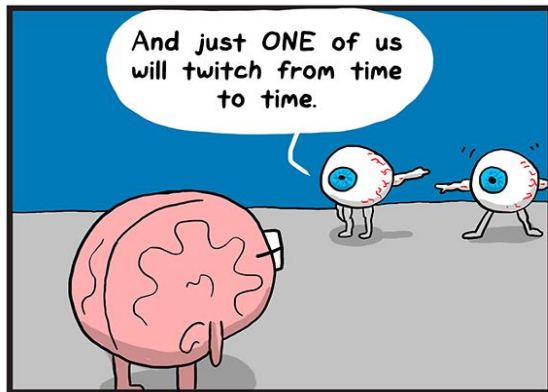
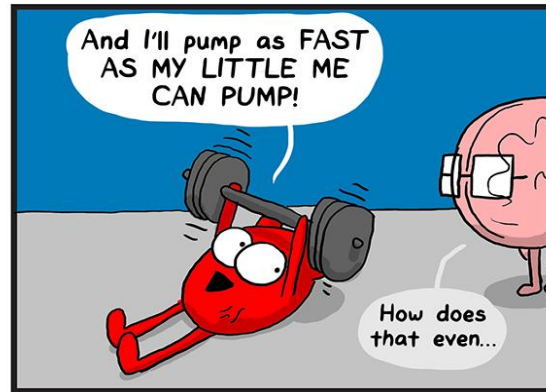
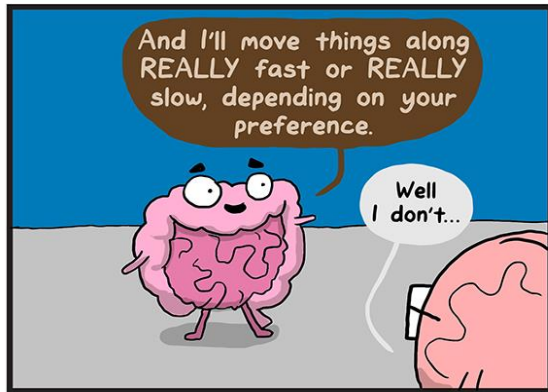
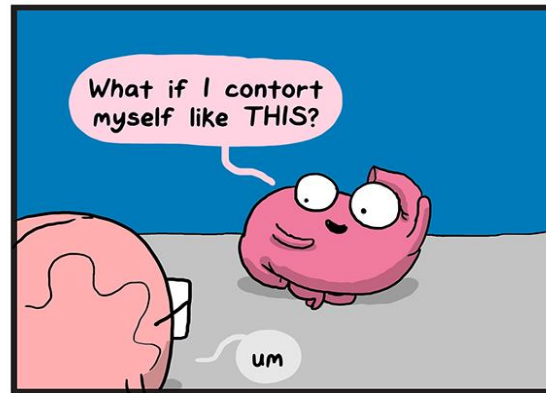
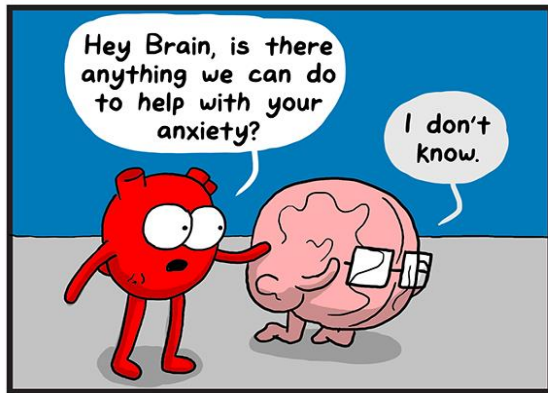
- **Physical symptoms**

- Pounding heart
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness
- Upset stomach
- Sweating
- Tremors
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Upset stomach
- Frequent urination



- **Emotional symptoms**

- Feeling of apprehension or dread
- Feeling tense and jumpy
- Restlessness or irritability
- Anticipating the worst
- Watching for signs of danger
- Difficulty concentrating

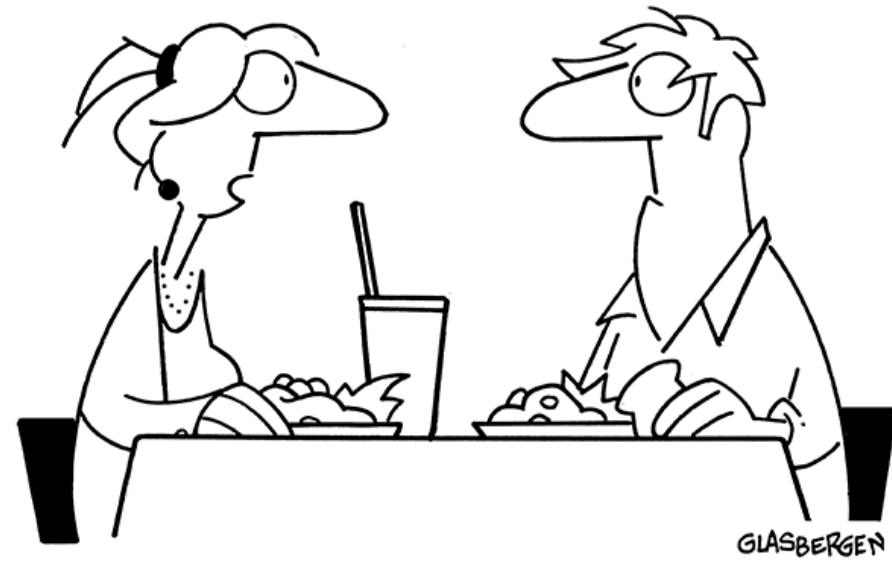


theAwkwardYeti.com

# Anxiety

- The neurotransmitters responsible for depression are the same ones for anxiety. They often occur together.
- Most people wait longer to seek treatment for anxiety than depression.
- Several different types of anxiety disorders, including generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Anxiety symptoms are often mistaken for ADHD.

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glasbergen.com



**“I wasted all day today worrying about  
the yesterday that nobody will  
remember tomorrow.”**

# When do you need help?

- If you feel like hurting yourself
- When depression or anxiety is interfering with your ability to function normally at school or work
- When depression or anxiety is interfering with your relationships
- When depression or anxiety is interfering with your ability to enjoy life



# Treatment



## Successful treatment includes some or all of the following:

- Counseling
- Medication
- Self care
- Management of chronic disease
- Family and friend support
- Spiritual support
- Time

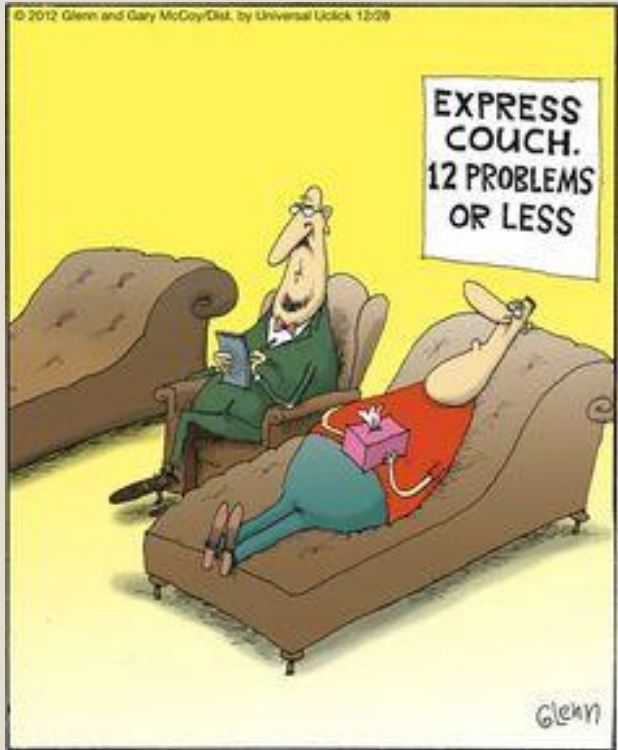


# Filling up the pit principle





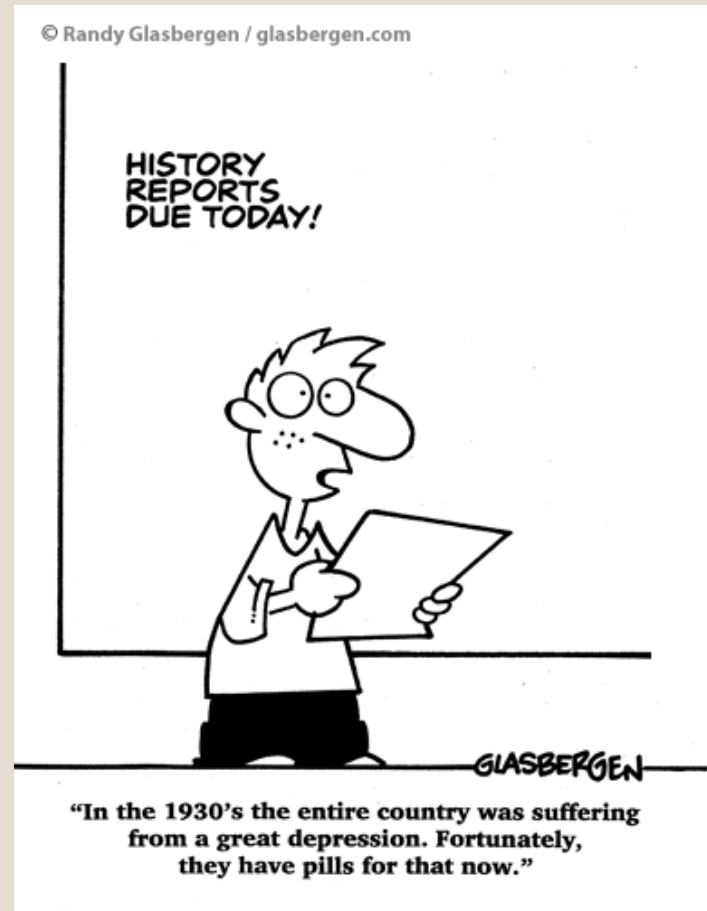
# Counseling



- Trains your brain to refocus your thinking patterns
- Coping strategies for when you're in crisis
- Understand your behavior and that of others
- Eases stress
- Gives you a new perspective
- Makes it easier to stick to your treatment plan
- Catches early signs that your depression is getting worse
- There are many different styles of therapy for different issues

# Medication

- Can be very beneficial, *especially* in combination with therapy and other lifestyle changes
- Takes 2-3 weeks to start feeling better, 6-8 weeks for full effect
- May take a few dosage or medication changes to find the right fit for you
- Side effects generally subside after the first few weeks
- Target serotonin, dopamine and/or norepinephrine, making more available for your neurons



# Self Care

- EXERCISE!
- Good nutrition
- Sleep
- Mindful meditation
- Light therapy
- Education
- Structure in your schedule
- Manage stress
- Journaling
- Positive self talk
- Avoid self medicating with destructive behavior or substances



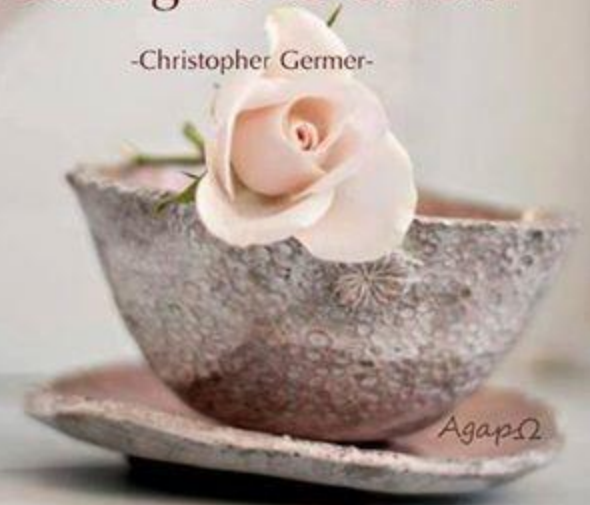
# Self Compassion

Strategy for calming and refocusing:

- Three deep belly breaths
- Identify internal dialogue
- Label it – Accept your feelings and identify “stinky thinking”
- Confront it – “Is it true?”

Self-compassion  
is simply giving  
the same kindness to  
ourselves that we  
would give to others.

-Christopher Germer-



RESEARCH  
AND MORE  
RESEARCH



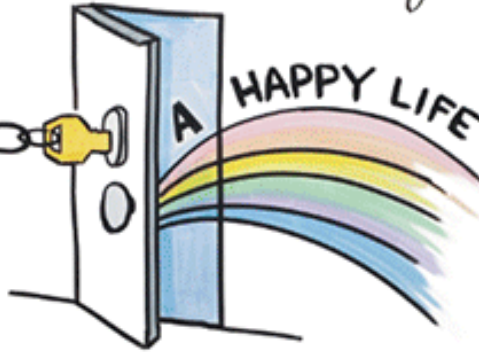
self-compassion

# BE KIND to YOURSELF

by KRISTIN NEFF



SELF-COMPASSION  
A SOURCE of STRENGTH  
and RESILIENCE



## 1 SELF KINDNESS



WE ARE AS CARING  
TOWARD OURSELVES  
AS WE ARE TOWARD  
OTHERS

## 2 RECOGNIZING OUR COMMON HUMANITY



SHARED HUMAN  
EXPERIENCE

## 3 MINDFULNESS

BEING OPEN TO THE  
REALITY OF THE  
PRESENT MOMENT



ACKNOWLEDGE  
OUR SUFFERING  
WITHOUT  
EXAGGERATING  
IT



seeyourwords.com



When we break a bone:

Sign my cast!



When we get a bad cut:

Check it out!  
12 stitches!



When we get the flu:



Jibby McJibbers

Today at 5:32 AM · 🌐

I just threw up all over everything I own. I need an old priest and a young priest.

21 Likes



Like



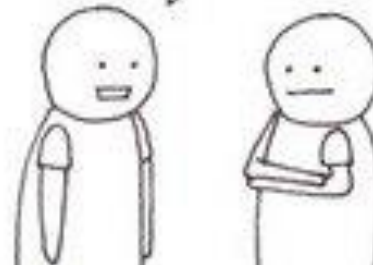
Comment



Share

When we struggle with mental health issues:

Hey.



Beatrice the Biologist



# Things Not to Say

- It's all in your head.
- We all go through times like this.
- Look at the bright side.
- You have so much to live for. Why do you want to die?
- I can't do anything about your situation.
- Just snap out of it.
- What's wrong with you?
- Shouldn't you be better by now?



I get that you have food poisoning and all,  
but you could at least make  
an effort for the rest of us.



I think if you just changed your frame of  
mind you'd probably feel better.



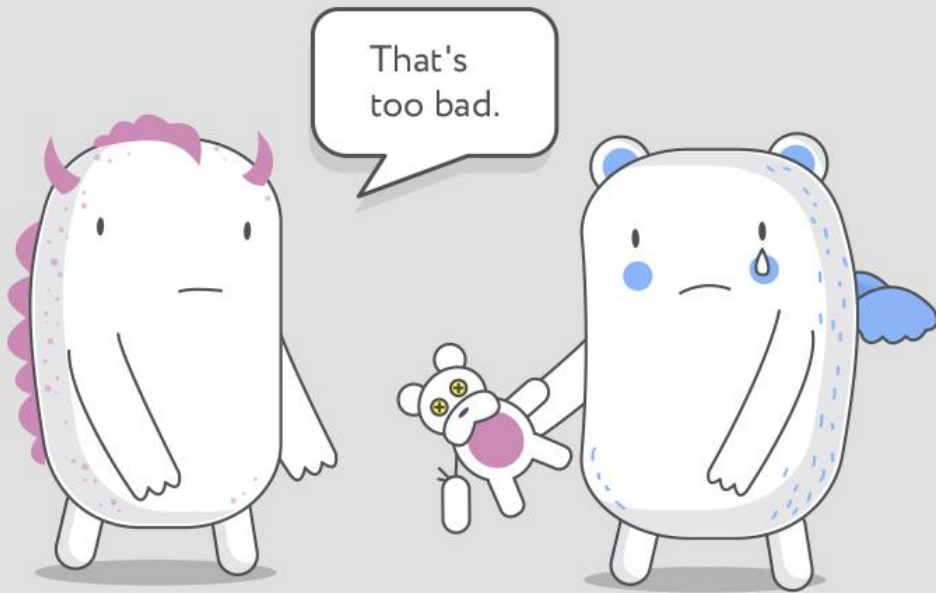
# Family and Friend Support

What can I do for a friend who is depressed?

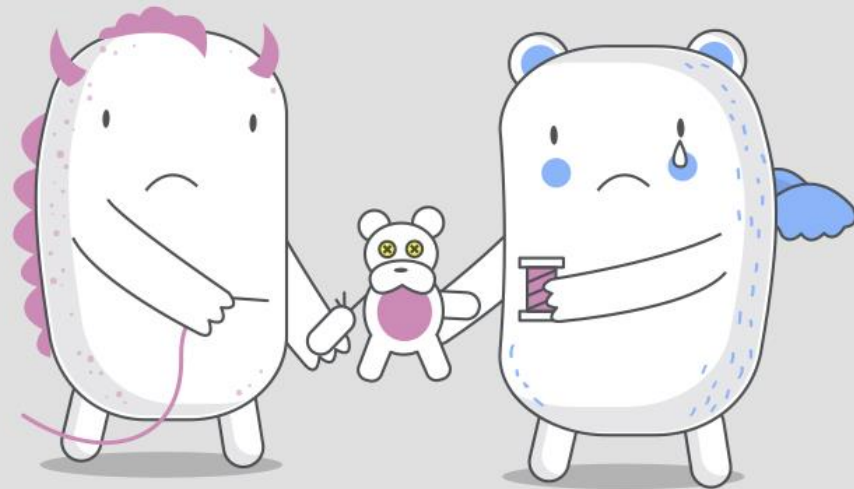
- Open the conversation: “I wanted to check in with you because you have seemed pretty down lately.”
- Validate: “I’m sorry that you’re feeling this way.”
- Be patient: “I’m here for you.”
- Support: “You won’t always feel this way”
- Listen: “What do you think might help you feel better?”
- Concrete actions to relieve their stress: “Can I drive you somewhere or help you make an appointment?”



## HOW TO BE SYMPATHETIC



## HOW TO BE EMPATHETIC



# Phrases for calming an anxious child

- I am here.
- Tell me about it
- How big is your worry?
- What do you want to tell your worry?
- Can you draw it?
- Let's change the ending...
- What else do you know about....
- What calming strategies can you use?
- It's scary AND...
- I can't wait to hear about it.
- What do you need from me?
- You are safe.
- This feeling will pass.

Resource: <http://lemonlimeadventures.com/what-to-say-to-calm-an-anxious-child/>

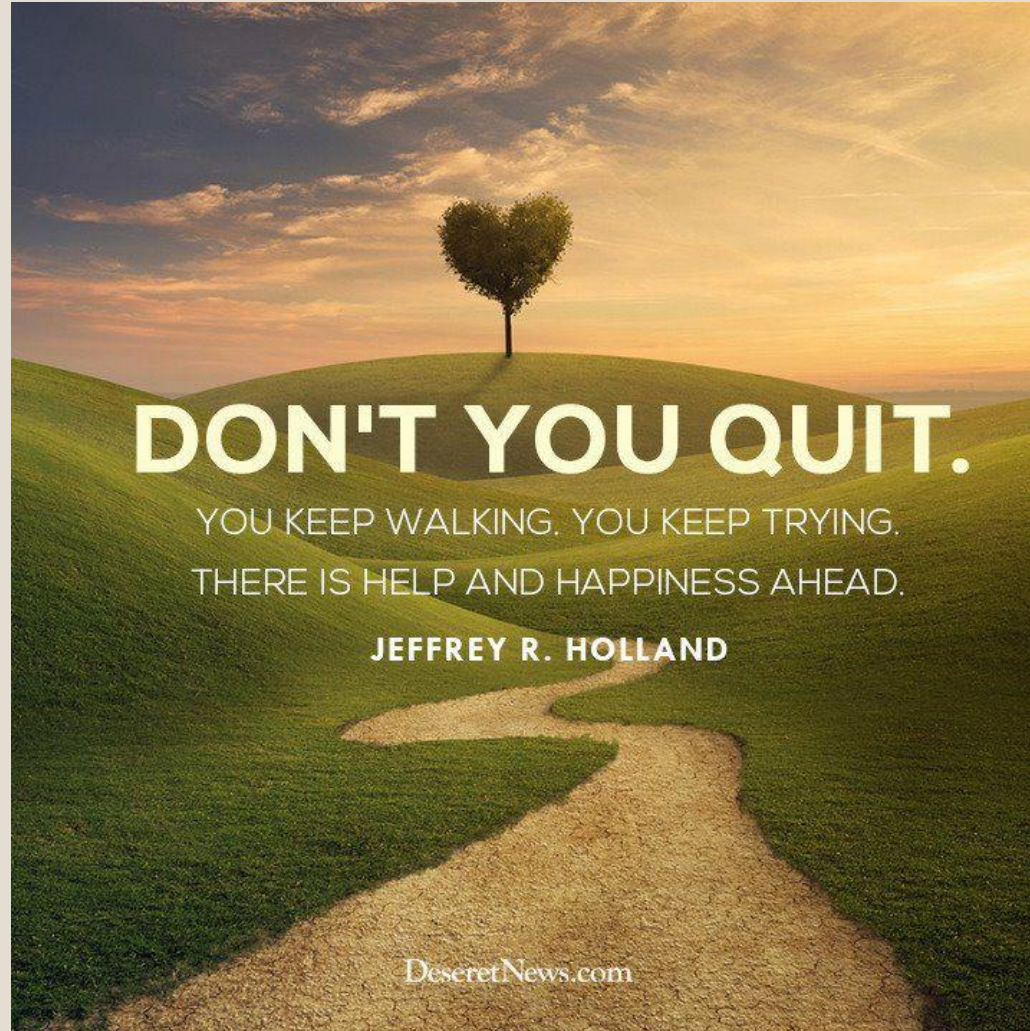


# Spiritual Care

- Elder Holland – *“Like a Broken Vessel”* October 2013
  - “Trust in God. Hold on in His love. Know that one day the dawn will break brightly and all shadows of mortality will flee. Though we may feel we are “like a broken vessel,” as the Psalmist says, we must remember, that vessel is in the hands of the divine potter. Broken minds can be healed just the way broken bones and broken hearts are healed. While God is at work making those repairs, the rest of us can help by being merciful, nonjudgmental, and kind.”
- Incorporate scripture study and prayer into your routine
- Be gentle with yourself regarding pressure to be perfect







# DON'T YOU QUIT.

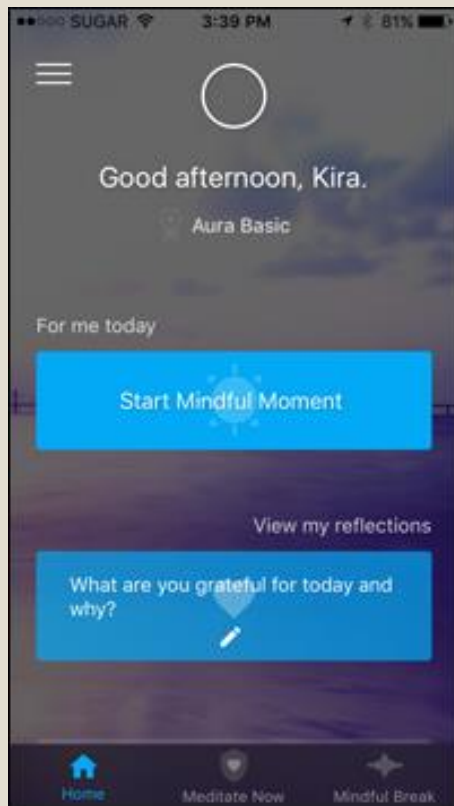
YOU KEEP WALKING. YOU KEEP TRYING.  
THERE IS HELP AND HAPPINESS AHEAD.

**JEFFREY R. HOLLAND**

[DeseretNews.com](http://DeseretNews.com)



# Mindfulness Apps



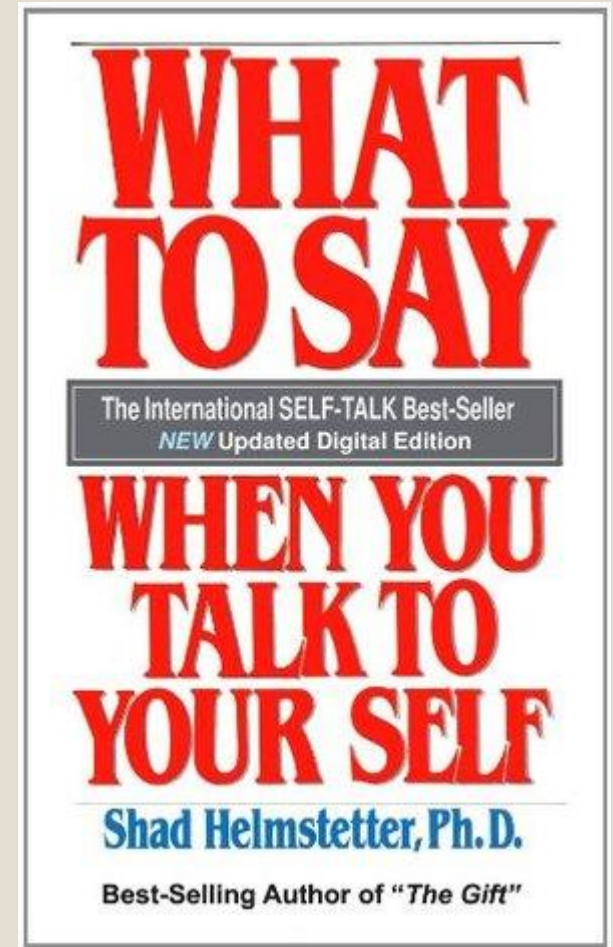
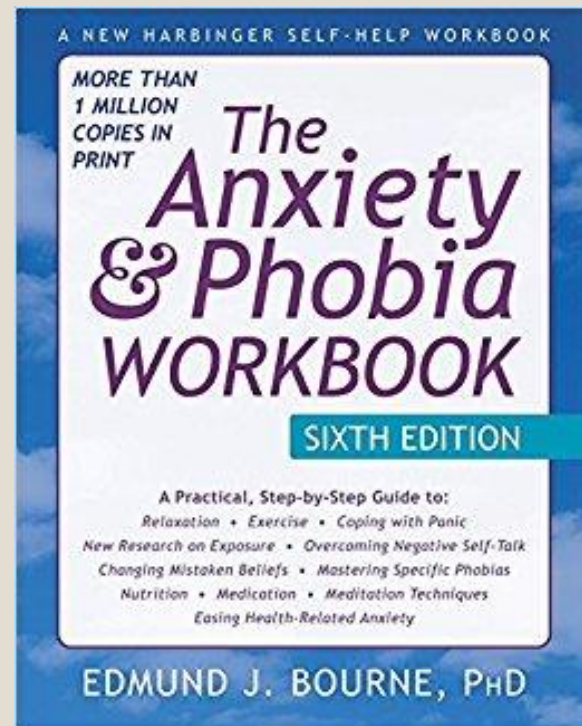
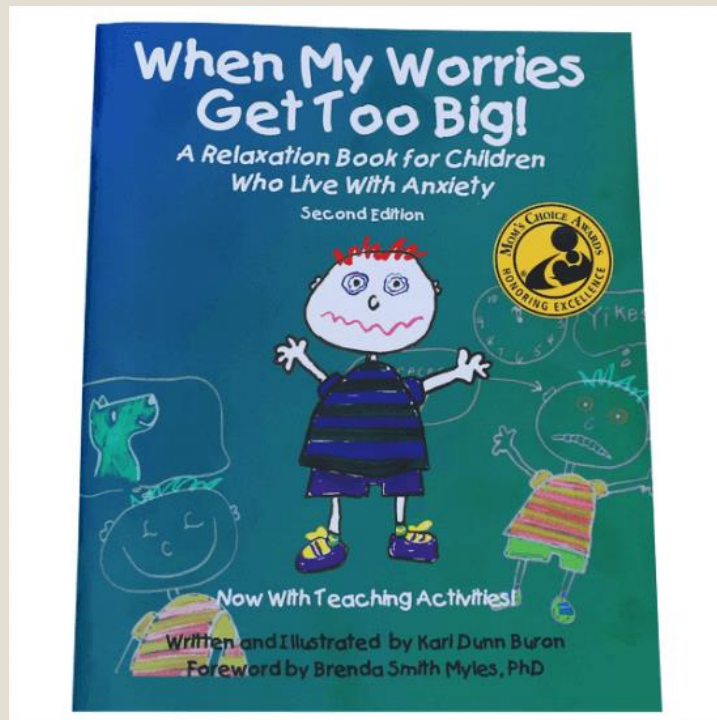
**Aura** –  
free 3 minute  
meditations daily



**Stop, Breathe  
& Think** –  
teaches you about  
mindfulness, 30 free  
sessions up to 11  
minutes long



# Book recommendations



# Suicide resources

- Suicide Prevention Team in schools
  - [www.hope4utah.com](http://www.hope4utah.com)
  - QPR training through Healthy Riverton – healthyriverton@gmail.com
- SAFE UTAH
  - Text “Start” to 741 741
  - Safe UT app: Secure, confidential texting support from trained people at the Utah Neuropsychiatric Institute



## Suicide Hotline



***If you or someone you know is thinking of harming themselves, the quickest way to access appropriate resources is through the nearest Emergency Room. Call 911 if you need help getting there.***

# Resources

- [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org) – National Alliance on Mental Illness – information and referral resources
- [www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/](http://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/) - Information on multiple mental illnesses
- <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/mental-health-screening-tools> - Online screening tools and information
- [www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com) – Therapist finder by category and location
- <https://caps.byu.edu/audio-files> - Mindful meditation recordings
- <http://counselingcenter.utah.edu/services/mindfulness.php> - Mindful meditation guide, links to recordings and free apps
- <http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22> – Free guided mindful meditations, 3-13 minutes in length
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-courage-be-present/201001/how-practice-mindfulness-meditation> - Description on how to practice mindful meditation



You're worth it.