

NONPHARMACOLOGIC APPROACHES for DEPRESSION



June 22, 2016

Objectives:

1. Define nonpharmacologic approaches or interventions.
2. Identify evidence-based approaches for treatment of depression.
3. Determine expected health outcomes after nonpharmacologic approaches are implemented.

Definition:

- Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness & loss of interest that impacts how the person feels, thinks, behaves & functions on a daily basis
 - Negatively impacts quality of life (QOL) & function
 - Leads to poor health outcomes
 - Can be successfully treated!

Characterized By:

- Depressed or sad mood; feeling empty
- Diminished interest/pleasure in activities
- Weight gain or loss
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation
- Fatigue
- Inappropriate guilt
- Difficult concentrating
- Recurrent thoughts of death



Treatment Guidelines:

- **Combination of interventions:**
 - Pharmacological (*medication*)
 - Psychosocial
 - Spiritual
- Consider individual preferences & history
- Address co-morbid conditions (*bio & psych*)
- **INDIVIDUALIZED** plan of care
- Close follow-up & monitoring of side effects & effectiveness of interventions
- Possible referral or consultation



- “Psychological treatments are more effective than antidepressants in mild depression & equally effective in moderate depression
- Non-pharmacological options are 1st line treatments for the management of depression in adolescents & young adults
- Non-pharmacological strategies can be considered as part of a broader management plan
- Patient involvement in decision-making & provision of accurate information encourages adherence” (*MedicineWise News, 2016*)

- **Acupuncture**
 - Insertion of fine needles into different parts of the body to correct the imbalance of energy; very effective for pain (Nahas & Sheikh, 2011)
- **Animal Assisted Therapy** (*pet therapy*)
 - Can create a sense of calm & provide meaning & purpose
 - Evokes memories
- **Aromatherapy**
 - the use of essential oils & other aromatic compounds of plants



- **Bibliotherapy**
 - The use of selected reading materials as therapy (*self-help*)
 - Guidance in the solution of personal problems through directed reading
 - Form of **guided** self help (HANDI, 2013)
- **Homeopathy** (*homeopathic medicine*)
 - Plant/mineral based supplements
 - FDA



- **Journaling**
 - Written record or thoughts, experiences, observations
 - Stress management or self exploration tool
 - Focus on gratitude or emotional processing
 - Clarification of thoughts
 - Health benefits:
 - Cognitive function
 - Strengthens the immune system
 - Counteracts negative effects of stress (Anderson, 1999; Ullrich et al., 2002)



- **Lifestyle Modification**
 - Nutrition
 - Physical activity
 - Sleep hygiene
 - Relaxation techniques
 - Mindfulness
 - Plan for reducing/stopping stimulants:
 - Certain prescription medications
 - Nicotine
 - Recreational drugs
 - Alcohol, caffeine, sugar intake



- **Light Exposure Therapy** (box; phototherapy)
 - Exposure to bright light (2500 lux or >) in the morning (Nahas & Sheikh, 2011; Terman, 2007)
- **Massage Therapy**
 - Research has demonstrated increased neurotransmitter production (serotonin & dopamine)
- **Mindfulness** (Elliston, 2001)
 - Form of self-awareness
 - State of being in the present
 - Assists with mood regulation



- **Motivational Interviewing**
 - Promoting individual ownership of recommended behavior changes
 - Helping individual find a meaningful purpose for change
 - Honoring/understanding personal preferences & goals
 - Extinguishing maladaptive behaviors & learning new effective coping mechanisms
 - Rolling with resistance



- **Psychoeducation**

- Explanation of depression
- Multifactorial
- Prevalence
- Provide information about:

- **Diagnosis**
- **Treatment**
- **Signs of relapse**
- **Relapse prevention**
- **Coping strategies** (*Shimazu, Shimodera, & Mino, 2011*)



- **Psychotherapy**

- Types:



- **Supportive psychotherapy** (*Funderburk et al., 2011*)
- **Interpersonal therapy** (*Cuijpers et al., 2011*)
- **Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)** (*Chong et al., 2011*)
- **Mindfulness-based CBT** (*Piet & Hougaard, 2011*)
 - **Meditation**
- **Family therapy** (*Andreescu & Reynolds, 2011*)
- **Music therapy** (*Maratos et al., 2011*)

- **Problem solving therapy (PST)**

- Focus is training on adaptive problem solving attitudes & skills
- Centered on developing & improving coping strategies & the ability to handle upsetting life experiences
- Increases adaptive adjustment to life situations



- **Reminiscence therapy (Life Review)**

- Method of using the memory to protect mental health & improve QOL (*Chen, Li, & Li, 2012*)
- Discussing past life events
- Use of written/oral life histories
- Involves recalling & re-experiencing one's life events
 - » **Meaning**
 - » **Purpose**
 - » **Impact**
 - » **Forgiveness**



- **Social Interventions**

- Community-based social support groups
- Strategies ease burden of depression
 - Prevents social isolation
 - Dividing major tasks into smaller prioritized tasks
 - Postponing major life decisions
 - Setting realistic expectations
 - Aerobic activities



- **Relaxation therapy**

- Process that decreases the effects of stress on the mind & body
- Coping strategies
- Effects on body:
 - » Slows heart rate
 - » Lowers blood pressure
 - » Slows respiratory rate
 - » Reduces muscle tension & chronic pain
 - » Improves concentration & mood
 - » Decreases activity of stress hormones



- **Spiritual Interventions**
 - Know the person's story!
 - Person-centered
 - Holistic
 - Mindfulness
 - Meditation
 - Attentive listening
 - Meaning/purpose
 - Silence
 - Hope
 - Empowerment



- **Support & Encouragement**
 - Schedule relaxing or enjoyable activities every day
 - Self-identification of exaggerated negative or self-critical thoughts
 - Appropriate nutrition
 - Physical activity
 - Socialization
 - Volunteering
 - Community resources (Khouzam, 2009)



- **Yoga**
 - Exercise, relaxation, mental relief
 - Gentle, calming, fluid nature
 - Involves different poses, techniques & meditation practices
 - Stretch muscles to promote:
 - Strength
 - Flexibility
 - Detoxification
 - Emphasis on breathing & concentration



PEARLS

- **Importance of the person's story**
 - Preferences, goals, motivation, attitude
- **What their insurance will cover**
- **Community resources**
- **Individualized**
- **Follow up, monitoring & documentation**
- **If at 1st it does not work – try another intervention**
- **Therapeutic use of self**



References & Resources

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