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## Common Mistakes People Make When Managing Their Depression

When you're treating any illness, making mistakes is inevitable. After all, making mistakes is how you learn, grow and become healthy. Depression is a difficult illness, which colors how you see and feel about yourself. If you find yourself making the "mistakes" below, try not to judge yourself. Rather, view these mistakes as stepping stones that lead you in a more helpful direction. Below are 3 beliefs or behaviors that are ineffective in managing depression, along with insights into what works.

**Telling yourself to snap out of it.** "When you're depressed, it's common to think that there's no good reason that you're having trouble getting out of bed, struggling to concentrate, or feeling so low," said Lee Coleman, Ph.D, a clinical psychologist. You might try to motivate yourself by being self-critical or using shame. After all, when you're depressed, it can feel like you're swimming in negative, shame-soaked thoughts. While your intentions may be good, "the language of criticism, guilt and shame isn't helpful and usually makes us feel even worse." If these thoughts arise, Coleman stressed the importance of responding to them. "Remind yourself that nobody ever yelled themselves out of feeling depressed. Instead, take small steps and stay active." Getting healthy takes time.

**Not revealing what's going on.** When you have depression it's also common to feel embarrassed or ashamed. Depression "can feel like a fundamental flaw with who you are," said Coleman. Consequently, you may cover up how you're feeling, which might lead others to get frustrated with you or simply become confused about what's going on, he said. "Remember that others, even the ones who love you the most, aren't psychic and may still be operating on old information." When talking about how you're feeling, you don't need to divulge the details. What's more important is letting them know "what you need while you're working on feeling better." For instance, you might need more time to complete a project, he said.

**Underestimating depression.** "While many appear to realize that depression has a medical origin, some underestimate exactly how depression impacts their life," said Deborah Serani, Psy.D, a clinical psychologist and author. Some people don't realize that depression affects all facets of a person's life. She stated, "Personally, you might struggle with significant sadness, self-doubt, fatigue, difficulty concentrating and hopelessness. These symptoms might cause you to withdraw from your relationships or become irritable and impatient with others. At work or school, symptoms might lead to incomplete assignments, poor performance and difficulty remembering important information. When you understand your depression and how it affects your entire life, you're able to address those symptoms and support yourself with effective techniques."

Modified from: <https://psychcentral.com/blog/5-mistakes-people-make-when-managing-their-depression/>

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