

Holiday Blues? Research Suggests Depression May Be Headed Off with a “Prescription” That Doesn’t Involve Popping Pills

Researchers validate the impact of trusted social connections in reducing the risk of depression.

WASHINGTON, DC, US, December 9, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Holidays can be a tough time for someone missing a loved one, dealing with family issues, or feeling overwhelmed by the demands of an increased level of activity. Recent research has found that talking with a trusted friend is not just a good idea if you’re feeling low, but may be the best way to lower the risk of depression setting in.



Help for feeling low may be in your own hands. Research suggests that talking with a trusted friend lowers the risk of depression.

Examining data from over 100,000 participants in the UK Biobank, a team of researchers from Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard University looked for factors affecting people’s lives that could be modified to reduce the risk of depression. More than 100 lifestyle, social, and environmental factors were scrutinized, including various forms of exercise, recreational activities, do-it-yourself activities, time spent on electronic devices, sleep, diet, and the intake of vitamins.

“

We have evolved to participate in community, to forge lasting bonds with others, to help one another, and to share life experiences. We are, simply, better together.”

Dr. Vivek Murthy, Surgeon General of the United States

Confiding in others was found to be the factor most associated with reduced odds of depression, with the finding “validating the impact of trusted social connections as causally protective for depression,” according to the [study](#), published in October 2020 in the American Journal of Psychiatry. Researchers noted that this form of [social interaction](#) was protective even for individuals deemed at

risk for depression due to earlier trauma they experienced.

Visiting with family and friends was also found to be a likely preventive factor, “pointing to frequent social interactions as an additional key facet of social engagement that may be protective,” the researchers wrote.

In addition to social connections, various forms of vigorous exercise and getting enough sleep were other top factors associated with a lowered risk of depression.

Recent research at University College London also found that social connections resulted in less depression. Psychiatrist Andrew Sommerlad, M.D., and colleagues analyzed the impact of reduced social contact and support on the incidence of depression among U.K. residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their study, published in *Psychological Medicine* in January, found that individuals with more supportive or more frequent social contact had fewer symptoms of depression, with face-to-face interaction more beneficial than by phone or video.

Dr. Vivek Murthy, Surgeon General of the United States, [addressed](#) the value of social connectedness in his book, *Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World*, published in 2020. Dr. Murthy explored loneliness as a public health concern because of its role as a root cause of, and contributor to, many of today’s physical and mental health problems, including depression.

His “prescription” is simple. “At the center of our loneliness is our innate desire to connect,” he wrote. “We have evolved to participate in community, to forge lasting bonds with others, to help one another, and to share life experiences. We are, simply, better together.”



The number of U.S. suicides falling 3% in 2020 from the prior year, despite a substantial increase in depression and anxiety due to the pandemic, suggests resilience was a factor.



Adverse effects of antidepressants include worsening depression, violence, and suicidal thoughts and actions, and users face the risk of severe and long-lasting withdrawal symptoms when they discontinue the drugs.

The Citizens Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) supports evidence-based, non-drug approaches to preventing and handling mental health problems like depression, and also recommends that those experiencing emotional difficulties seek a complete physical exam with lab tests to discover any underlying physical cause for their mental or behavioral symptoms.

CCHR continues to warn the public against the serious adverse effects of antidepressants when taking or discontinuing the drugs. Research has linked antidepressants to deepening depression, violence, and suicidal thoughts and actions, while also finding that the drugs are ineffective

for most people. A 2016 study led by Nordic Cochrane Centre researcher Andreas Bielefeldt found that giving SSRI (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor) antidepressants to healthy adult volunteers with no signs of depression doubled their risk of suicidality and violence.

Patients taking antidepressants also face the risk of severe and long-lasting withdrawal symptoms when discontinuing the drugs, even when slowly tapering off them under the supervision of a physician. Depending on the drug and the length of time taken, those withdrawal effects may include hypertension, seizures, stroke-like symptoms, amnesia, agitation, fear, anger, aggressive behavior, hallucinations, delirium, and suicidal thoughts.

A 2019 study, published in Addictive Behavior, found that more than half (56%) of antidepressant users experienced withdrawal effects when they discontinued the drugs, with half (46%) of them describing the effects as "severe."

CCHR advocates for the full disclosure of the risks of the serious side effects and withdrawal symptoms of antidepressants and other psychiatric drugs, so that patients can make fully informed decisions about taking or discontinuing the drugs.

WARNING: Anyone wishing to discontinue or change the dose of an antidepressant or other psychiatric drug is cautioned to do so only under the supervision of a physician because of potentially dangerous withdrawal symptoms.

CCHR also applauds the guidance issued to U.K. health care practices in November by the



London-based National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, advising that antidepressant drugs should not be considered first-line treatment for depression. Instead, the institute recommends patients should be offered and able to choose from a variety of treatment options, including such non-drug options as exercise and mindfulness.

CCHR was co-founded in 1969 by members of the Church of Scientology and the late psychiatrist and humanitarian Thomas Szasz, M.D., recognized by many academics as modern psychiatry's most authoritative critic, to eradicate abuses and restore human rights and dignity to the field of mental health. Since then, CCHR has helped obtain more than 180 laws that protect mental health patients.

The CCHR National Affairs Office in Washington, DC, has advocated for mental health rights at the state and federal level. The CCHR traveling exhibit, which has toured 441 major cities worldwide and educated over 800,000 people on the history of abusive psychiatric practices up to the present time, has been displayed in Washington, DC, at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Annual Legislative Caucus and other locations.

Anne Goedeke

Citizens Commission on Human Rights, National Affairs Office

+1 202-349-9267

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/557908338>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2021 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.