

Depressive Mood and Depression During the Pandemic Process

The Covid-19 pandemic has now taken a significant place in all of our lives. Almost each one of us is filled with curiosity and anxiety about our future. These emotions can sometimes be accompanied by feelings of hopelessness, pessimism, and sadness. Various diseases and loss, witnessed either remotely or in close surroundings, can also influence the experience of such emotions.

In this challenging period, which is difficult for all of us in many dimensions, there are times when we may find ourselves in a **depressive mood**, accompanied by all the pessimistic feelings. Feeling sad, hopeless, joyless, and helpless are common experiences during a depressive mood. These feelings are quite normal emotions that each of us occasionally encounters in the course of life. **Depression**, on the other hand, is a different condition from a depressive mood. An individual in depression experiences intense levels of sorrow, grief, helplessness, and hopelessness for the future. Feelings of guilt often accompany these emotions. Feelings of self-blame and worthlessness are prominent. Daily life loses its meaning for the individual. Activities that used to bring pleasure no longer do so. Changes in appetite and sleep patterns, either increase or decrease, may be observed. Difficulties in attention and concentration can occur. There is a strong reluctance to engage in life. Along with this lack of interest, motivation drops, and the person struggles to bring out their true potential. Consequently, if the individual is a student, there may be significant declines in academic performance, and if they are employed, there may be noticeable decreases in work performance. Withdrawal from social environments can be accompanied by strong introversion. In cases where the lack of interest in life is extremely intense, thoughts of death, suicidal thoughts, or attempts may arise. A significant decrease in the quality of life can also be observed.

During challenging life events that bring sudden changes to our lives, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, we may all feel ourselves in a depressive mood from time to time. However, individuals predisposed to depression may experience this mood more intensely and for a longer duration, along with the symptoms mentioned above. If such intense symptoms have been experienced for at least two weeks, the condition is no longer referred to as a depressive mood but is classified as depression. Therefore, individuals experiencing these types of symptoms should seek support from a psychiatrist or psychologist. Depending on the severity of the condition, sometimes therapy alone or, in conjunction with therapy, the use of medication prescribed by a psychiatrist is aimed at improving the individual's well-being and enhancing their quality of life.

Depression differs from the grieving process after a loss. During the grieving process after a loss, feelings of sadness, helplessness, and sometimes hopelessness may arise. However, the difference between depression and the grieving process lies in the intense feelings of worthlessness and guilt that an individual experiences during depression. Therefore, in therapy, support is provided to the individual by working through these feelings and understanding how they developed. As the person gradually understands the source of these feelings, they feel a sense of relief, can create new meanings in their life, and begin to feel better within the therapeutic relationship established in this safe environment.

It is normal for every individual to experience a depressive mood, and after the natural cycle of sorrow, hopelessness, or sadness, the emergence of feelings such as joy, happiness, and hope is expected. Despite challenging processes like Covid-19, our natural repair mechanism continues to help us find new meanings to survive. However, for some individuals, transitioning from feelings like grief and sadness to happiness may not be easy. If, despite your efforts, you find yourself in an enduring depressive mood, if these feelings are negatively affecting your life, and if the depression symptoms mentioned above have appeared, you can seek psychological counseling or therapy support from our unit.

To receive online therapy or counseling support from Altınbaş University Psychological Support Unit, you can send an email to psikolojikdestek@altinbas.edu.tr, including your name, surname, and department.

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