

CHOICES YOU HAVE WHEN YOU FEEL BAD PSYCHOTHERAPY OR MEDICATION

More than 50 million people suffer at any given time from either mental health or addictive disorders. Unfortunately only a third of those ever get professional health. That is regrettable according to Consumer Reports. They did the biggest survey ever on consumer satisfaction with mental health care. The results showed that therapy makes an important difference, with virtually everyone who sought help experiencing some relief.

Therapy helps people get better in three ways. First, therapy eases the concerns and problems that bring them to therapy in the first place. Second, therapy helps people function better with others, increase productivity at work and become more stress resilient. Third, therapy enhances personal growth. It helps people enjoy life more and have more self-confidence and self-esteem.

Life throws all of us curved balls-disappointments, losses, transitions and challenges that effect our present mood and, by our decisions, our future life. Therapy is a time efficient way to sort out these issues and concerns. Therapy consists of talking about what matters to you and getting a professional and caring "safe harbor "to explore, understand and learn ways to more effectively and authentically live your life.

Medications exploded onto the scene in the late 1980 and 1990's. The SSRI's (Prozac, Zoloft etc.) promised more specific help with mood and with fewer side effects. Managed Care saw them as a time and cost efficient way to provide mental health services. The problem with medications, however, is that they all have side effects and many fear they have been over prescribed. When one is truly indicated, however, they make a world of difference. Research has shown that medication alone is not as effect as psychotherapy and medication combined. For many, many people therapy that focuses on the present and the thoughts which effect how we feel is enough.

When you find yourself not being able to be or feel like yourself because of what is happening in your life or with your mood don't berate yourself, but rather seek out a competent and compatible therapist to begin exploring where to go next.

Suzanne C. Saul, Ph.D.
Psychologists