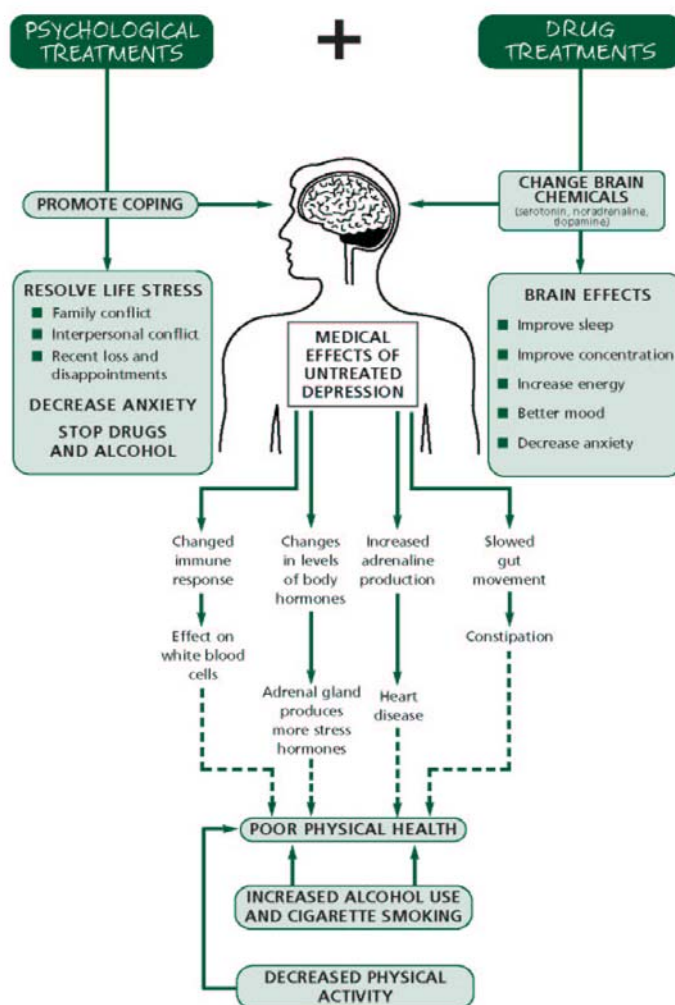


WHY USE BOTH PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENTS AND MEDICATIONS?



- Medical research clearly shows the effects of depression and anxiety on both the body and the mind.
- Many of the body's most fundamental systems are disrupted. These include:
 - Your central nervous system (ie. brain function);
 - Your sleep-wake cycle;
 - Your hormonal system;
 - Your stress response system;
 - Your immune system; and,
 - Your gastrointestinal (gut) system.
- When you are depressed or anxious you feel physically unwell.
- Irrespective of how each person gets depressed, psychological treatments and medications may each help to relieve key symptoms.
- Different types of depression and anxiety require different treatments. While some patients only need psychological treatments, others respond best to medications.
- Psychological treatments, including cognitive-behavioural therapy, can help to change your activities, feelings and thoughts to speed your recovery and prevent relapse.
- Medications for depression and anxiety are not addictive.
- Both psychological treatments and medications can help long-term functioning.

The diagram below shows how the combination of psychological treatments and medications can successfully tackle the symptoms of depression and anxiety. Psychological treatments promote coping skills by dealing with life stressors and conflicts. Medications improve the effects on the brain by changing the brain's chemicals. The diagram also shows what physical effects occur if depression is left untreated.



This table outlines the types of strategies which would be the most useful for the varying degrees of depression and anxiety. For example, specific medication therapy is a more useful intervention for patients with severe depression compared to those with mild depression.

Table 1. Intervention strategies for patients with depression and anxiety

	MEDICAL ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW	EDUCATION	PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPY	SPECIFIC DRUG THERAPY
Mild depression	✓	✓	✓	-
Moderate depression	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Severe depression	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓**	✓✓✓
Mixed depression & anxiety	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Mild anxiety	✓	✓	✓	-
Moderate anxiety	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓
Severe anxiety	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓

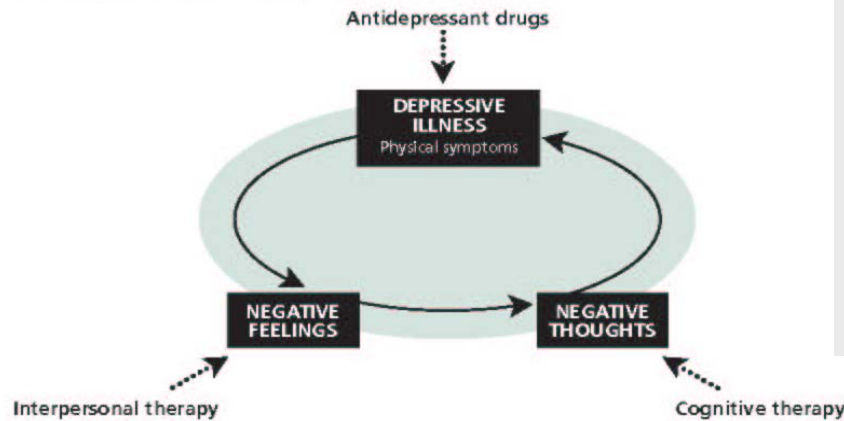
** N.B. If patients are severely depressed they may be unable to participate in psychological treatment (such as problem solving or changing negative self-thoughts) until they have responded to drug therapy.

Source: Hickie et al. Educational Health Solutions; 2000. Reproduced with permission [<http://www.spheregp.com.au>].

WHY USE BOTH PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENTS AND MEDICATIONS?



Breaking the depression cycle



MORE INFORMATION

beyondblue fact sheet - Cognitive therapies target thinking patterns; includes interpersonal therapy which targets negative feelings and relationship-based issues.

beyondblue fact sheet - Why to I need to take antidepressant drugs? targeting the symptoms of depressive illness.

TREATMENTS THAT WORK

- A variety of treatment strategies are available for patients with depression and anxiety.
- Different treatments target different parts of the depression cycle.
- The most important thing is to get a psychological treatment or medication(s) that works for you!
- Many 'treatment(s)' do not fix the problem! For example, sleeping tablets or simple counselling are ineffective (even though they may provide temporary relief).
- Effective antidepressant strategies (psychological and medication) relieve the physical symptoms and correct the negative thoughts and feelings.

ACCESSING INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR ILLNESS AND TREATMENT

- It is important for you, your family and close friends to understand as much as possible about the treatment of depression.
- Information helps you to recognise your symptoms, understand their relationship to stress, and helps you to work towards recovery.
- Read the information from this website carefully, ask your doctor questions and read other books, pamphlets and websites.
- Contact self-help groups.

MORE INFORMATION

'Treating depression: the *beyondblue* guidelines for treating depression in primary care.' - *Medical Journal of Australia* (2002) [http://www.mja.com.au/public/issues/176_10_200502/ell10082_fm.html] Ellis and Smith provide evidence-based treatment guidance across the spectrum of depressive disorders and delineate where specialist treatment and primary care is indicated. Download the article to learn more.

Source: Hickie et al. Educational Health Solutions; 2000. Reproduced with permission [<http://www.spheregp.com.au>].