



# Mental health

Listen!



## Let's Think

1. What do you think of mental illnesses?
2. Can you name two common symptoms of depression?

You are Juliana. You are reading a web page about dysthymia.

<http://www.healthinfo.com.hk/dysthymia>



## Dysthymia<sup>1</sup>

### Q: What is dysthymia?

Dysthymia is seen as milder, more long-lasting<sup>2</sup> depression.

It is estimated<sup>3</sup> that over 100 million people from all around the world suffer from this mental disorder. Similar to major depression, dysthymia is more common among females than among males.

### Q: What are the symptoms and effects?

Dysthymia shares most symptoms with depression, including nagging<sup>4</sup> feelings of sadness, fatigue<sup>5</sup>, decreased appetite, poor self-esteem, despair<sup>6</sup>, sleeplessness and excessive sleep. In most cases, the symptoms shown in dysthymia patients are milder than those shown in major depression patients. In other words, they are more manageable<sup>7</sup> than major depression's symptoms. As dysthymia patients may succeed in keeping their negative feelings to themselves, their family members usually fail to recognise that something has actually gone wrong.

As the negative feelings go on<sup>8</sup>, patients would start to lose the will to take part in social activities, have difficulty focusing on tasks and find themselves having conflicts with their family members more often. Without treatment, these symptoms could be lifelong.

### Q: What may happen if no proper treatment is sought?

Even though dysthymia is referred to as milder depression, dysthymia is not an illness to be taken lightly at all. As symptoms which are left untreated may take a turn for the worse<sup>9</sup>, patients could develop symptoms of major depression, such as suicidal thoughts and self-destructive behaviour. It is important to note that a person can be diagnosed with dysthymia and major depression at the same time, which is known as double depression.

### Q: How can it be treated?

Dysthymia can be treated through medicines and psychotherapy, which is also recognised as talk therapy. It should be kept in mind that one should not, and cannot, wait out the symptoms of mental disorders, like dysthymia and major depression.

(291 words)

## Part A

Answer the following questions using the information from the web page. Choose the **BEST** answer and blacken **ONE** circle only.

- Which of the following is **TRUE**?
  - A. Dysthymia is a more serious form of major depression.
  - B. Around 100 million people worldwide are diagnosed with major depression.
  - C. Women are more vulnerable to both dysthymia and major depression than men.
  - D. Men do not know much about dysthymia.
- In paragraph 2, the words 'despair' and 'manageable' can best be replaced by \_\_\_\_\_ respectively.
  - A. 'madness' and 'demanding'
  - B. 'anger' and 'saddening'
  - C. 'fear' and 'scary'
  - D. 'hopelessness' and 'controllable'
- Which of the following statements may **NOT** be said by a dysthymia patient?
  - A. 'Even when I'm hungry, I don't want to eat.'
  - B. 'There have been countless days when I failed to fall asleep. I've had enough.'
  - C. 'I have had a runny nose for more than 8 months. It is torture.'
  - D. 'I'm forever the worst one in class. I'm never going to succeed in anything.'
- In line 12, the word 'their' refers to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. the negative feelings'                       B. mental illness patients'
  - C. dysthymia patients'                               D. major depression patients'
- Which of the following is the definition of the phrasal verb 'wait out' in line 25?
  - A. to wait until something unpleasant has ended
  - B. to wait or wish for luck
  - C. to wait for the unpleasant results of something
  - D. to wait patiently in a way that is unnecessary

## Grammar Corner

We can use 'even though' to introduce a fact that makes the main statement more surprising.

**e.g.** *Even though dysthymia is referred to as milder depression, dysthymia is not an illness to be taken lightly at all.*  
(Lines 18-19)

## Part B

Answer the following questions using the information from the web page. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1. Find an adjective in paragraphs 1-2 that means ‘continuing for a long time’.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. State two similarities between dysthymia and major depression.

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is double depression?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Find a phrase in paragraph 4 that means ‘to become worse’.

\_\_\_\_\_



5. Circle the correct answer for each question.

Dear Diary,

I've been (a) ( *felt* / *feeling* / *feel* ) gloomy for more than a month. I often feel (b) ( *tired* / *tiring* / *tiredness* ) all day long so it's difficult for me to focus on my homework. I think I'm having something people call (c) ( *sleeplessness* / *low-self-esteem* / *despair* ): I'm feeling so hopeless that I think this sense of sadness will live with me for the rest of my life. Last week I talked about it with my best friend, James, and he asked me to seek (d) ( *professional help* / *peer support* / *proper medicines* ) as soon as possible. James used to suffer from major depression before and conquered it with the help of his psychiatrist. So, I think I will follow his advice...

# Vocabulary Bank

The following are some common mental illnesses. Match them with the correct pictures. One of the words is not used.

panic disorder    bipolar disorder    anxiety disorder  
schizophrenia    eating disorders    obsessive-compulsive disorder



1.

a mental illness in which a person is so anxious that their normal life is affected



2.

a mental illness causing someone to change often from being extremely excited to being very depressed



3.

a mental illness that causes a person to do something repeatedly for no reason



4.

a serious mental illness in which someone cannot differentiate what is real and what is imaginary



5.

a mental illness in which someone experiences sudden periods of intense fear



## Let's Discuss

1. Do you agree that there is not enough attention given to mental health in society?
2. Why do some people think that there is a negative view on mental illnesses?