

## Video Guide

### *DEPRESSION: BEATING THE BLUES*

28 minutes, color, 1983

#### A. Introduction

Depression. A familiar word and one used freely when trying to describe or explain a melancholy mood. Yet the 'blues' that most people experience dissipate after a few hours or days. Yet what if they don't? What if the symptoms and feelings of pensiveness do not evaporate after a short amount of time? What if the individual becomes more sorrowful, unhappy and feels hopeless and helpless?

Being depressed in the past, as it still is today, was considered a stigma. In the good old days, when a person needed help or was sent for outside help, they were often referred to in a whispered hushed way and the family of the afflicted person would often say the person had gone to a sanatorium for a much needed rest.

- B. This videotape deals with the personal journey of Dr. Norman S. Endler, a successful psychologist. His book *Holiday of Darkness* (1990) is a paperback book which provides more details than the film. He began to experience difficulty of being tired, anxious, tense, his sex drive disappeared, and he had trouble sleeping and eating. He lost all interest in daily activities and became more distressed as the symptoms did not alleviate. Since he was a clinical psychologist, he recognized what was happening, but he felt as though he should be able to cope with it because of his profession. He finally sought help, at his wife's urging, and was placed under the care of Dr. **Persad**.

Dr. Endler's depression was narrowed down to biological causes and not due to psychological trauma. Anti-depression medication was prescribed and Dr. Endler found himself feeling better for a brief time but he then relapsed back into his former depression. Dr. **Persad** prescribed other anti-depressants, but they did not seem to help much. Dr. Endler had detrimental side effects from the drug therapy such as dry mouth, constipation, and drowsiness. Dr. Endler ended up with secondary depression from not being able to find a resolution for his initial depression.

Finally ECT was tried with positive results. After a number of sessions, Dr. Endler was feeling like his old self and began to step his pace up to the hectic level prior to the depression. He was then diagnosed as a manic-depressive. Lithium was given to fine tune his life (helping to control the excessive highs and lows) and Dr. Endler recovered from his bout with depression. Yet Lithium, used on a long-term basis, can bring about tremors, kidney damage, weight gain, and frequent urination. Use of the drug is still controversial.

- C. True clinical depression can take weeks or even months to deal with. Are there certain people more susceptible to depression than others? How many people do, indeed, suffer from acute depression? 2 %-5 % of all races suffer from depression. Women suffer twice as much as men, and they seek help more often than men. Yet what if help is not obtained or the individual tries to cope on their own? Some individuals get better after a period of time, some stay the same, and some get worse, and some attempt suicide. 12-15 % commit suicide with depression as the cause.

#### D. What Causes Depression?

There are a number of theories, but researchers are not certain as to the cause. Research has been done into the biochemistry aspect of depression. Some suggested that perhaps depression may be genetic and inherited. A specific gene was thought to be the carrier of depression, but it has received little support. Some researchers and psychologists think that the cause of depression lies somewhere in between psychological and biological. It probably is a combination of background (childhood experiences, feeling unloved, picked on, adult stress, failures) and biochemical.

#### E. How Effective Are The Current Treatments?

Drug therapy is beneficial but has undesirable side effects. Medication may work for one person but not work for the next. Dr. Endler was one of these that it did not work for. Too, it can mean the individual may have to be on the drug for a longer period of time before it starts working.

Counseling is also another means of working out depression, but this, too, can take months or even years. The three stages of counseling: (1) Introduction - establishing a rapport between therapist and client, (2) Working through and dealing with the problem(s), (3) Termination phase where the client separates from the therapist. Dr. Beck has suggested a form of therapy called 'Cognitive Therapy' that he believes is as good and effective as drugs. It deals with the person being convinced that their perspective is wrong and negative, that they have unjustified assumptions and tend to over generalize.

ECT (electroshock therapy) is very effective in helping to control levels of depression; however, the media has distorted the image of the therapy in such films as *One Flew Over **The** Cuckoo's Nest*. ECT produces an explosive outburst in the brain; hormone levels go up as well as electrolytes react in a volatile manner. Several sessions are needed for lasting results. Why this treatment works is still a mystery, but it does seem to have an impact on the brain and long-lasting depression. However, ECT is usually reserved for the more severe cases.

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. What is depression?
2. What causes depression?
3. What are the treatments for depression?
4. What did you learn from the videotape?