

Emotional Problems and Homoeopathic Treatment

ABSTRACT: Emotional problems are often over-whelming. They are most easily recognized and accepted when precipitated by an obvious event, such as bereavement, job loss or marital breakdown. For many women, asking for help is often far from easy but it is important not to suppress your feelings, as this can store up trouble for later. If you are unfortunate enough to suffer from a psychiatric illness, you may still suffer from emotional problems and you may find that homoeopathy will help you through it.



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The term "Emotional Problem" is frequently used to describe a wide range of psychological difficulties. The most common symptoms are depression and anxiety, but emotional problems also include many feelings such as anger, frustration, loss of self confidence and guilt. You may be more vulnerable, if you had an unsatisfactory upbringing. There may be few women who do not experience emotional stress at some time in their adult life. Some women have the extra difficulty of living through a range of emotional pressures that de-

pend to some extent on their hormone levels. They may experience considerable emotional distress as a result of premenstrual syndrome, painful periods, pregnancy, child birth or menopause. Homoeopathy is particularly well suited to relieve emotional problems. Acute medicines will often be helpful for the minor ups and downs. Constitutional treatment has of course, a much wider range of action. The more serious emotional problems should only be treated with homoeopathy if there is medical supervision. Homoeopathic medicines



can be taken along with other medicines after discussion.

Some of the common emotional disorders that we see in our daily practice are:

DEPRESSION: Depression is a normal response to a sad event or to a series of mishaps. When you experience symptoms of mild depression, such as feeling low, tired, irritable or frustrated, you may well find a homoeopathic medicine that helps. More serious depression is indicated by changes in appetite, loss of libido, sleep disturbance and thoughts of suicide. It can often be helped by constitutional prescribing, but this requires medical supervision.

ANXIETY: Anxiety is a perfectly normal emotion and can range from a feeling of mild unease to that of intense fear. Because anxiety is an unpleasant feeling it can have beneficial effects of stimulating you to avoid or remove the cause. It is only when anxiety disrupts your every day activities that it becomes a problem. It can take over your thoughts and will often lead to an irrational feeling that something bad will happen. Anxiety can cause physical symptoms like palpitations, chest pain, muscle tension, digestive upsets, frequency in urination, sweating, blushing and fatigue. It is important to discuss your symptoms fully with your doctor because so many of these symptoms can also be caused by physical illness.

PANIC ATTACKS: A panic attack is a brief period of intense anxiety in which you feel that you will die or lose your reason. At first these attacks are unpredictable but eventually they are associated with certain places such as a crowded bus. The physical symptoms are those of anxiety and may in particular include over-breathing (hyper-ventilation), which can often be helped by breathing in and out of a paper bag for a few minutes.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER: This type of anxiety occurs either immediately after a frightening event or some months later. Such events include natural disasters, serious accidents, rape and other violent attacks. The symptoms include feelings of guilt, dreams or recurring memories of the event

and a sense of isolation. Homoeopathy is often beneficial for panic attacks and post-traumatic stress because of the idea of never having been the same or an event can be a strong indication for certain medicine, some of which are discussed in this section.

PHOBIA: The word phobia means fear but it is usually used to describe an on-going and irrational fear of an object, animal or a situation. It is common that most people are afraid of spiders or snakes for example, and this characteristics can be very useful in determining which constitutional medicine to prescribe. A phobia only becomes a problem when it interferes with normal life, and than it usually needs professional treatment.

EATING DISORDERS: The relationship between women and food is very complex. Eating is no longer a matter of survival but has become a social event, and most meals are prepared by women. A women is expected to be a good cook, also to nurture her children by giving them adequate and interesting food as part of being a "good mother". The provision and preparation of food has thus become closely associated with a woman's feelings about her role in life and how well she is doing it. On a personal level women can become obsessed by food. Appetite is normally controlled by feelings of hunger before a meal and satisfaction afterwards. It is therefore not surprising that women often turn to food, when they feel depressed or in need of comfort. Obesity is not just the result of over-eating, it can result from too much slimming. It has been recognized that, in some women, severe calorie restriction stimulates the body into becoming very efficient so a return to a normal calorie intake after a period of dieting is accompanied by weight gain. A further complication, in western countries at least, is the social pressure to be thinner than is sensible or healthy. Fortunately the growing awareness of healthy eating is creating a more balanced approach to 'slimming' with realistic goals for weight and diets that contain adequate amounts of minerals and vitamins.

ANOREXIA NERVOSA AND BULIMIA NERVOSA: They are

eating disorders that are becoming increasingly common. Anorexia nervosa is a serious disorder much more complicated than a simple loss of appetite and indicates a psychological aversion to food. The disorder usually, but not always, occurs in adolescent girls who fear becoming fat and develop a distorted impression of their own body image. In fact, at the start of the illness, sufferers are often perfectly normal in size and weight. During the illness the menstrual periods often become quite irregular and may even stop completely. It is vital that medical advice is sought as early as possible following the onset of the illness. Some people suffering from anorexia nervosa need to be admitted to hospital for treatment. In anorexia there is an over-whelming fear of being fat, so food is avoided and there is a serious, sometimes fatal loss of weight. In bulimia, bouts of over-eating are followed by self induced vomiting, which is usually done in secret. Although bulimics are often of normal, or near normal weight, they can endanger their lives by becoming dehydrated, and the loss of potassium from their bodies can cause weakness. The diagnosis is sometimes made by dentists since the repeated vomiting of the acidic stomach contents may damage the teeth. Homoeopathic medicines can be useful for eating disorders, but anorexia and bulimia should be treated only under medical supervision.

DRUG DEPENDENCE: A drug is a chemical substance that is known to alter the way the body functions and/or to change the course of a disease. Such substances are present in tea, coffee, alcohol and cigarettes and are often used to excess by people under stress, recreational drugs are being increasingly used for relaxation, particularly by young people.

DON'T DEPEND ON STIMULANTS: Many people looking for ways to ease the stresses of life turn to caffeine, alcohol and sugar. Although these may be beneficial in small amounts, in greater quantities it may give rise to adverse effects. Taking too much caffeine from drinks such as coffee or food such as chocolate can make you feel unwell.

CAFFEINE: Found in coffee, tea, cola, chocolate, some pain-killing drugs

BENEFITS

1. Reduces fatigue, aids concentration
2. May relieve asthma
3. Enhances simple pain killers
4. Minerals such as manganese and fluoride are also present in tea.

ADVERSE EFFECTS

1. Can cause anxiety, panic attacks, nervousness, depression, irritability and insomnia
2. Tremor and palpitations can be the side effects.
3. Can bring on indigestion, diarrhoea and also raised cholesterol.
4. Iron and zinc deficiency if tea or coffee is taken with meals.
5. Can bring on migraines or withdrawal headaches.
6. Restless legs particularly at night can be a side effect.
7. Can make a baby unsettled if you are breast feeding, self help if you think less caffeine would help you withdraw gradually to avoid headaches.

ALCOHOL: Virtually every organ in the body can be damaged often seriously by it. If you regularly drink more than 3 units of alcohol a day, it should be cut down as a priority. One unit of alcohol is a glass of table wine, a small glass of sherry, half a pint of beer or a single pub measure of spirits.

BENEFITS: The chances of osteoporosis, heart disease and strokes may all be reduced by drinking 1 to 2 units a day. But increase in drinking increases the risk more. In heart diseases the benefit is greater with wine than with beer or spirits. If you regularly drink more than 3 units of alcohol a day you should cut down as soon as you can.

ADVERSE EFFECTS OF MODERATE DRINKING

Obesity- calories from alcohol convert easily to fat. Nutritional deficits: your body requires more vitamins and minerals. The risk of breast cancer and

high blood pressure are increased by drinking more than one alcoholic drink a day. Panic attacks can be triggered by alcohol in susceptible individuals – hot flushes occur more frequently after alcohol.

TIPS FOR MODERATE DRINKING: Have two alcohol-free days a week – quench your thirst first with a non-alcoholic drink – dilute your drink by a mixer and drink slowly – say no to that last drink, or make it a soft one. Record your units by keeping a diary, eat a good diet, don't skip meals and never replace a meal with alcohol on its own -replace evenings at the pub with a hobby, sports etc.

SUGAR: Although sugar has the reputation of giving you a lift, its action is sedative in the brain, sugar is best taken indirectly as starch, which the body then breaks down into sugar.

BENEFITS: Relief of premenstrual syndrome. Regular meals or snacks of starchy foods may benefit many women. Do not take fat and protein at the same time.

ADVERSE EFFECTS: These include poor control of blood sugar and obesity.

EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS: Person may feel pathetic, worn out and weepy, reluctant to be in company yet not truly on own, vigorous exercise, especially dancing or aerobics or watching a thunderstorm may lead to feeling better, may suffer from a loss of libido and dislike being touched sexually, even if feeling over worked will still refuse offers of help.

SYMPTOMS AND HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICINES

Complete and almost total loathing of food and drink, tendency to be over-weight at the start of the illness. Tendency to be sentimental and dislikes being touched may feel peevish sad and weepy - *Antimonium-crudum*.

Nervous and anxious people, who are excitable or melancholic and over sensitive to noise – nausea and constantly yawning – a desire for alcohol – *Asarum-europeum*.

Following a total loss of appetite, lips and tongue become very dry and constipation develops with hard dry stools. Cannot bear any disturbance or movements and wants to be left alone, becoming irritable, angry and nervous if disturbed – *Bryo-alba*.

Anorexia begins after suffering grief, fear or extreme anger. Intolerance of any help or consolation. Terrible headaches, which come on during the day and recorded in the early evening – tongue feels numb and tingles – acne and greasy skin— *Nat-m*

Anorexia often follows a debilitating illness, may appear pale and grayish and have a poor memory and slow thought process. Stomach feels full after the smallest amount of food or drink and can become very distended with wind — *Carbo-veg*.

Total aversion to the sight or smell of food and bright lights and noise become unbearable –the illness often comes on after grief -*Colchicum*.

Any slight appetite disappears on eating the first mouthful of food, especially cold food. Tendency to become apprehensive, weepy and cannot bear to be contradicted, symptoms are worse between 4 and 8 pm. The illness may follow a fright or anger – *Lycopodium*.

Fear that food is poisonous and becomes very restless, anxious and apprehensive, especially at night –dizziness when walking or standing – *Rhus-tox* Nausea from the smell of cooking food. A tendency to faint very easily. Very sad and weepy feelings, with indifference to family and friends. But there is a dread of being alone – a continual empty feeling in the stomach which is not relieved by eating -*Sepia*

Complete appetite loss with sour belching and great acidity in the stomach – skin is unhealthy with acne and itching, which gets worse when scratched or washed –selfish, irritable and argumentative. A sensation of weakness that is worst mid-morning – abdomen is very sensitive to pressure – *Sulphur*.

Food is vomited as soon as it reaches stomach. Suitable for tall, slim, sensitive artistic types who are oversensitive to light, noise, smell, and touch, restless and fidgety- affects tall, usually slim women the illness often follows grief or an unfortunate love affair, complaints of colicky abdominal pains, when trying to eat – *Calcareo-phos*.