



An Integrative Depression Model

This model aims to demonstrate the interaction between the various factors that are important in the onset of a depressive episode and can affect how long the episode persists.

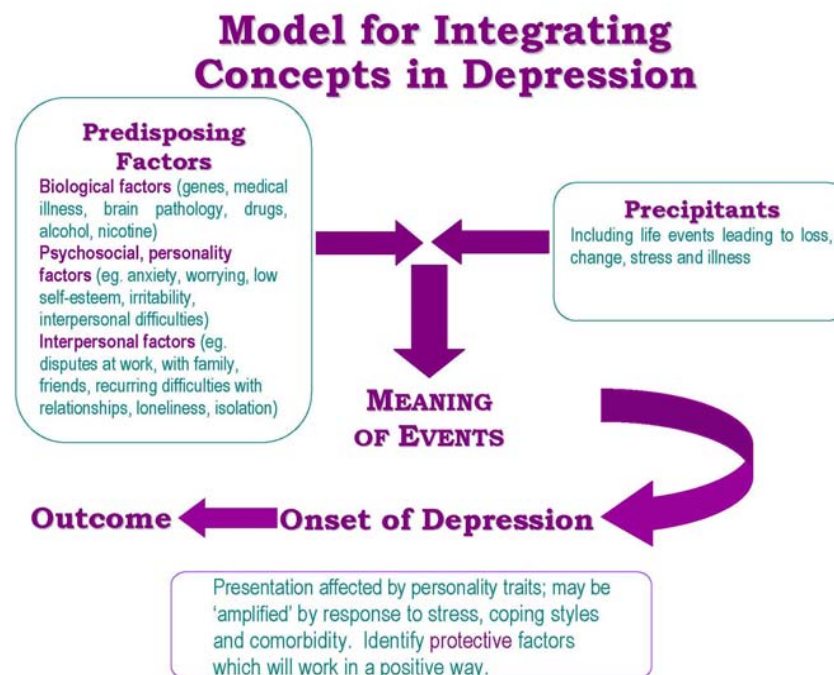
The impact of these factors varies from one individual to another and from one type of depression to another. Some individuals have more biological factors, eg. family history of depression or bipolar disorder and some medical illnesses that can predispose to a melancholic depression. Others have more psychological factors such as a 'worrying' or pessimistic style, unresolved anger, grief or traumatic events that can predispose to one of the non-melancholic depressions.

While life event precipitants and vulnerability factors are relevant for onset, the outcome for episode is linked to the type of depression, temperament, presence of other disorders and the individual's coping style. These issues are particularly relevant for the non-melancholic depressions¹.

Protective factors are often overlooked or undervalued. They include an optimistic style and previous adaptive coping; the ability to maintain a good social network and collaborative relationships with partner, friends and clinicians; good health and good lifestyle habits and the ability to take on new ideas and make changes.

The accompanying sheet 'Understanding your Depressive Episode' provides a framework for understanding the factors that are important in the onset and course of depressive episodes for specific individuals. It is intended to be used collaboratively by individuals and their clinicians to promote understanding of the depressive episodes and where treatment should be directed.

¹ This topic is explored in Gordon Parker's book, *Dealing with Depression* available from Allen and Unwin (also see Resource list).



UNDERSTANDING YOUR DEPRESSIVE EPISODE

PREDISPOSING FACTORS

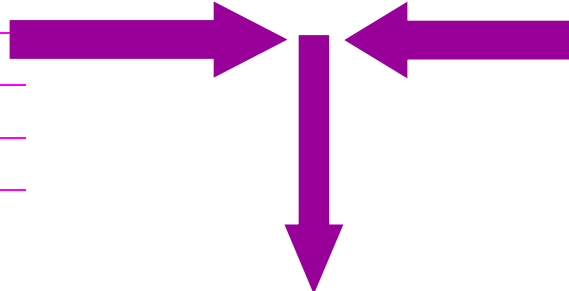
Biological factors eg. genetic factors, medical illness, brain injury, medications, drugs, alcohol, nicotine

Personality factors eg. anxiety, worrying, low self-esteem, irritability, irritable style, perfectionism, feeling trapped or helpless

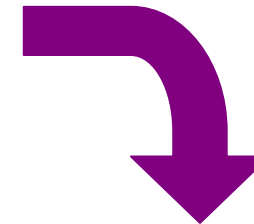
Interpersonal factors eg. disputes at work, with family, friends, recurring difficulties with relationships, loneliness, isolation

PRECIPITANTS

Including life events leading to loss, change, stress and illness



PERSONAL MEANING OF EVENTS



HOW EPISODE IS EXPERIENCED

Symptoms, particularly early in episode:

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Including social support, alliance with treating clinicians, understanding of depression, effective coping strategies:

Outcome

