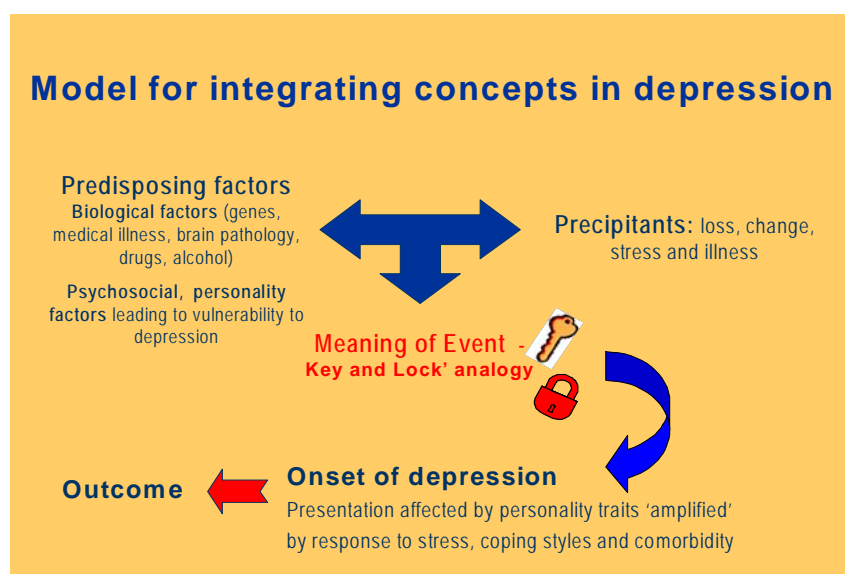




An Integrative Depression Model

This model aims to demonstrate the interaction between the various factors that are important in the onset of an episode of depression and also can determine how long the episode persists.

While the impact of these factors varies from one individual to another, the type of depression is also very important. This means that some individuals have more biological factors (such as strong family history of recurrent depression or bipolar disorder, other medical illnesses known to be strongly associated with depression) all of which 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.



The 'key and lock' concept aids in understanding why episodes occur when they do, and why some events (even seemingly trivial ones) are so important to individuals. The cognitive 'lock' consists of events laid down in childhood, which is then opened by a 'key', comprising a mirroring event later in life. For example, a child has been frequently told that he/she is "a nuisance" is later in life in a situation where once again he/she feels "a nuisance".

This concept is more relevant for non melancholic depressions although melancholic depressions can also be precipitated by events that are meaningful for the individual and outcome is also influenced, to some extent, by temperament and coping style factors. The presentation in the non melancholic depressions is reflected by stress-related amplification of individual temperamental characteristics¹.

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; the ability to take on new ideas and make changes.

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