

Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Depression (IPT-D) is a talk therapy developed to help people better deal with life problems that cause or make depression worse. As people better deal with life problems they usually feel less depressed.



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For more information about IPT for Depression, please talk with your local VA provider.

www.va.gov



INTERPERSONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR DEPRESSION



WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Feelings of depression often include being sad, down-in-the-dumps, and “blue.” Everyone occasionally feels this way for a day or two. For some people, feelings of depression last longer than a few days and may even last for months or longer. Along with depressed mood, other common symptoms of depression include:

- Losing interest in doing things
- Having to push yourself to get things done
- Being critical or down on yourself
- Being more critical of or irritable toward others
- Feeling hopeless about what the future will bring
- Having difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- Having thoughts that life is not worth living

If you have been feeling depressed, and have experienced some or all of the above symptoms for more than a few weeks, it may be helpful to work with a VA mental health care provider who can help you to recover from depression.

WHAT IS INTERPERSONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR DEPRESSION?

Veterans taking part in Interpersonal Psychotherapy for Depression (IPT-D) meet weekly with a mental health care provider for 12-16 sessions. At the beginning of IPT-D, the mental health care provider will learn about what has been going on in your life, the people who are important to you, your symptoms of depression and what seems to be causing them. Working with the mental health provider, you will choose one or two problems you want to work on that are connected with your depression. Then you'll work with the provider to take action. You will try out new skills to address your problems, and you'll come back each week to talk with your mental health care provider about what is working and what is not working in helping you to make changes in your life.



WHAT ARE THE KINDS OF LIFE PROBLEMS THAT ARE OFTEN CONNECTED WITH DEPRESSION?

Many Veterans with depression have problems in one or more of the following areas:

- **Life Changes:** Life is full of changes. Some common changes for Veterans include returning from active duty, losing a job, resuming parenting after deployment, going back to school, dealing with health problems or injuries, experiencing divorce or separation, and taking care of a family member with health problems.
- **Difficulties or Problems with Other People:** Some Veterans have problems with others such as with a spouse/partner, friend, or employer and feel stuck and not sure what to do.
- **Grief:** The death of an important person in your life can be very difficult and some Veterans find it hard to come to terms with that death. Examples include death of a spouse/partner, parent, child, friend, or fellow Veteran or military service member.
- **Isolation:** Some Veterans want more connections with others, but find it hard to start relationships or keep them going. For example, some military service members find it hard to get close to others or to reconnect with others after returning from deployment or completing military service.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF INTERPERSONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR DEPRESSION?

The goal of IPT-D is to reduce depression, improve quality of life, and enable the Veteran to better handle life problems that are connected to the depression.

CAN I TAKE ANTIDEPRESSANT MEDICATION AND ALSO BE IN INTERPERSONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR DEPRESSION?

Yes. Sometimes the combination of medication and psychotherapy works best.

DOES INTERPERSONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR DEPRESSION WORK?

Forty years of research has found IPT-D to be effective in reducing symptoms of depression and improving people's ability to handle life problems that can cause depression or make depression worse. VA recently evaluated a program of IPT-D in Veterans and found that it was highly effective in reducing depression and improving quality of life.