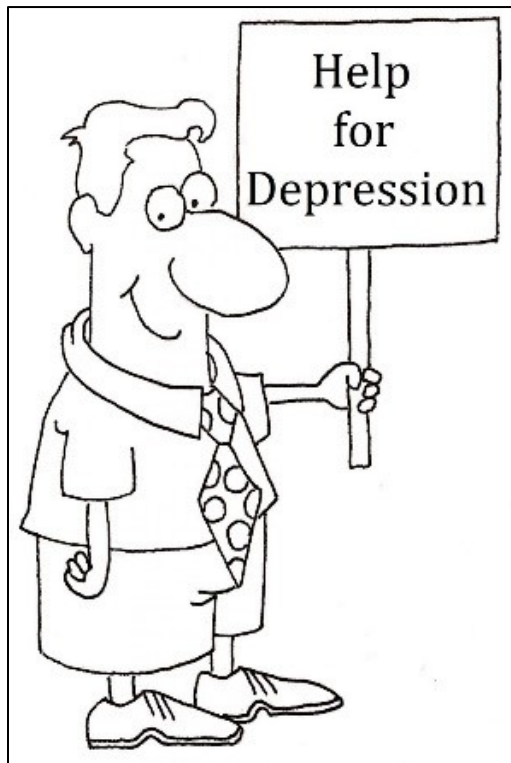


# 100+ Ways to Take on Depression And Win

by Kim Rosenthal, MD

Psychiatrist  
Broughton Hospital, NC



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## Introduction

As a psychiatrist, when I see a patient with depression, I often show them the *List*.

The list is just a basic run-through of available treatments for depression. It takes five separate angles – biological, psychological, social, systemic, and alternative methods – and pulls them together into one place. That's what you have in your hands: 100+ ways to take on depression and win.

Depression hurts. I hope this relieves some of that pain. But this list is more than conquering an illness. It's *hope*.

- *Kim Rosenthal, MD*



### How to use this list

- Print this booklet and circle each option that might work for you. Circle as many as possible.
- Pick one method and try it. This might mean calling your doctor, changing a habit, going somewhere... lots of stuff.
- If the method is complicated, divide it into steps. Consider asking for help.
- One by one, identify which methods work for you.
- If an intervention helps with mood most of the time, it's considered *effective*. These are your first-line treatments. Repeat often.
- An intervention that works part of the time or reduces the intensity of depression without getting rid of it completely is considered *partially effective*. Use these too. A little relief is better than no relief.
- Those that don't work can be labelled *not effective* -- but don't toss out a treatment method until you've given it some time and effort! Sometimes a very effective strategy just takes practice.
- *There might be interventions that aren't right for you; if in doubt, talk to a mental healthcare professional.*

## Biological interventions



- Healthy diet
- Getting enough sleep on a regular schedule
- Sleep deprivation (short-term relief)
- Medications: [antidepressants](#) and [augmenting agents](#) \*
- Healthy nutraceuticals (SAM-e, Methylfolate, Omega-3 Fatty Acids, 5-HTP, Saint John's Wort, etc)
- Light therapy
- Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)
- Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS)
- Ketamine infusions
- Vagus nerve stimulation (VNS)
- Treatment of co-occurring disorders (antipsychotics for hallucinations, detox for alcohol withdrawal, Suboxone for heroin addiction, or Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) for post-traumatic stress disorder)
- Rule out physical problems that mimic depression, like hypothyroidism
- Treatment of physical problems like [pain](#)
- Endorphins (exercise, laughing, sex)
- Avoid unhealthy behaviors like excessive drinking or using drugs

\*All links lead to articles on Dr. Rosenthal's website, [kimrosenthalmd.com](http://kimrosenthalmd.com)

## Psychological Interventions

- [Cognitive therapy](#)
- [Behavioral activation therapy](#) for depression
- [Psychodynamic therapy](#)
- Acceptance and commitment therapy (mindfulness-based therapy)
- [Dialectical behavioral therapy \(DBT\)](#)
- Psychoanalysis
- Interpersonal and social rhythm therapy (for bipolar depression)
- Interpersonal therapy
- Positive psychology
- Experiential therapy
- Narrative therapy
- Couple therapy
- Family therapy
- Group therapy
- Support groups (online or in person)
- Affirmations
- Spirituality
- [Find meaning](#)
- Creativity (locate your muse)
- Art therapy
- [Education about depression](#)
- Maintain routine/schedule
- [Mindfulness](#)/meditation
- Hobbies
- [Fun tasks](#) (drawing, going skating, or drinking hot chocolate)
- Aromatherapy
- [Humor](#)
- Pet therapy
- Muscle relaxation
- [Coping skills](#)
- Think about good memories
- [Journaling](#)
- Distraction
- Preparing ahead of time
- [imagery](#)
- Imagination
- [Assertiveness](#)
- Doing the opposite



- Take good memories from the past and project them into the future
- Imagine a positive future
- Self-help or inspirational books
- Self-help websites
- [Gratitude list](#)
- Make moves to reduce stress
- Make moves to increase resilience
- Change [perspective](#)
- Make changes in environment
- Help others
- Music
- Psychological treatment of other disorders (like anger-management for anger, exposure therapy for [panic attacks](#) & obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), AA for addiction.)
- Avoid unhealthy behaviors
- Do achievement tasks, actions that make you feel a sense of achievement (like finishing homework or paying bills)
- Make a list of strengths
- Take on a hobby (origami, collecting stamps, hiking, reading, etc)

# Social interventions



- Buy a teddy bear
- Adopt a pet
- Rent a horse and go riding
- Breed or train animals (parrots, horses, therapy dogs)
- Write a letter or email forgiving someone
- Make a gift for someone and send it to them (anonymously!)
- Reconnect with family and friends
- Strengthen the friendships you have
- End or limit toxic relationships
- Spend time with the person you married
- Talk to a mentor (professor, teacher, priest, 12-step sponsor)
- Participate in local support groups
- Join healthy online support groups
- Join local clubs, like hiking, reading, poker, couples, etc
- Sign up for local classes in dance, karate, etc
- Sign up for either credit or noncredit courses at the local college
- Work part or full time
- Change careers or find a job you like
- Volunteer with animals or people
- Join a church
- Learn about events in community and attend them, like talks, concerts, meetings, festivals, etc
- Avoid unhealthy social behaviors, like isolating or staying in unhealthy relationships

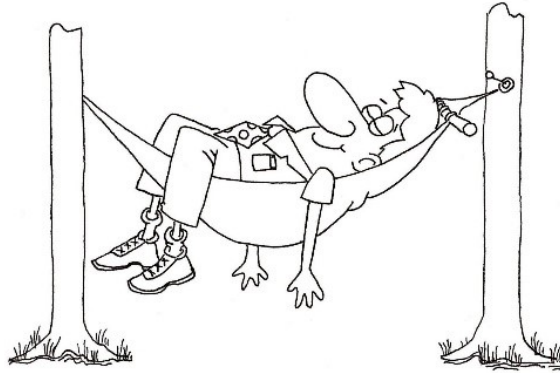
## Systems intervention

- See a [mental health provider](#)
  - Psychiatrist
  - Psychotherapist (psychologist, social worker, or licensed professional counselor)
  - Addiction counselor
  - Case manager
  - Life coach
  - Vocational rehabilitation therapist
  - Recreational therapist
  - Occupational therapist
- Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACT team)
- Partial hospital, day program, or intensive outpatient hospitalization
- Crisis unit
- [Psychiatric hospitalization](#)
- *Become* a mental healthcare provider
  - Psychiatrist
  - Psychotherapist (psychologist, social worker, or licensed professional counselor)
  - Addiction counselor
  - Case manager
  - Life coach
  - Vocational rehabilitation therapist
  - Recreational therapist
  - Occupational therapist
  - Other



## Alternative interventions

- Hypnotherapy
- Organic food diet
- Gluten-free diet
- Other diets
- Vitamins and minerals
- Massage therapy
- Acupuncture
- Acupressure
- Biofeedback
- Tai chi
- Yoga
- Karate



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## Conclusion

While some listed treatments are backed by scientific studies, others (especially the alternative methods) need further research to support their efficacy in the treatment of clinical depression. Regardless, I've included them in the list.

As long as this list is, it isn't exhaustive. There are likely another hundred interventions not included. That's a good thing. The list never ends.

Hang in there and, no matter what, have hope.

*"There are far, far better things ahead than anything we leave behind."* — C. S. Lewis



## About the author



When not writing, Kim Rosenthal practices life as a physician. Dr. Kim's career as a travelling psychiatrist has led her from countryside to big cities to places where no one speaks English. The author is board-certified, has licenses in Hawaii, Maine, and North Carolina, and a medical degree equivalency in Spain. Over the past 19 years, she has helped thousands of people deal with and get past mental illness and embrace a positive future. Mental health is more than surviving bad moments. It's remembering what makes life worth it. These days the author works as an attending psychiatrist at Broughton State Hospital in North Carolina.

The author is currently working on a publication for recovering addicts. It's called the *Wacky and Wonderful Recovery Workbook* and features worksheets about alter egos, poetry, art therapy, puzzles, and... you guessed it, dozens of cartoons... to help people get past addiction.

If you want to read more articles about depression and other subjects, check out [kimrosenthalmd.com](http://kimrosenthalmd.com). The site includes more than 110 mental health articles plus information about the upcoming *Wacky and Wonderful Recovery Workbook*.

