

# 'Think yourself out of Depression'

Rethink, a leading mental health charity launched a successful campaign in Norwich in 2006 to stamp out the stigma attached to people with mental health problems.

Norwich was chosen as the first site for an anti-stigma pilot in March 2006. Levels of mental health problems in Norwich are high. Rethink states that more anti-depressants are prescribed in Norwich than anywhere else in Central or Eastern England. Norwich traditionally has had a higher suicide rate than the national average and has the "unenviable position as a centre of high rates of self harm".

How many people in Britain experience mental health problems? The Office for National Statistics or ONS currently puts the figure at one in six adults at any one time.

I am very interested in this area of mental health as I have worked extensively with organisations such as MIND, Waveney Women's Health, Julian Housing and Norfolk ACRO. Teaching people in this region that are suffering from depression self awareness techniques has allowed them how to take greater control of their lives. I have found that one of the most effective tools in treating depression is through using affirmations and positive self-talk.

This article is written to provide some practical information about the use of affirmations and positive self-talk, aimed at people that are depressed, their carers and family.

Depression and mood disorders are now common illnesses in our society with as many as 30% of the adult population suffering depression at some stage in their life.

Self-talk is the kind of internal dialogue we have with ourselves and is very important to our overall mental health. Most people are not even aware of their negative mental dialogue as it becomes habitual. We need to be taught awareness of our thoughts before we can actually change them.

I have noticed that people who suffer from depression usually have very negative self talk and this needs to be addressed in order to increase ones self esteem and allow a person to begin making a recovery. The saying, "As you think, you become" is very true.

Our thoughts create our future. Many people who suffer depression have persistent negative thoughts for a majority of the time, sometimes from when they waken up in the morning until they go to bed. If we think negative thoughts often enough they will become our belief. It has been proven that our thoughts affect us at a cellular level and continuous negative thoughts have a detrimental affect on the cell structure which can leave us with a weakened immune system and more susceptible to disease.

Affirmations are positive phrases that are to be repeated as many times as possible throughout the day. They work by replacing negative thoughts logged in the subconscious mind with positive, nurturing thoughts. It is impossible to have negative thoughts at the same time as positive thoughts.

Our subconscious mind believes what it is told and if it is fed positive messages it will eventually believe them. Positive words or thoughts have a huge impact on how we feel and our feelings affects our behaviour and therefore what we do or don't take on in life.

The best results come from those who are open minded and willing to put in the work doing the affirmations on a daily basis.

Affirmations have to be present tense, positive and personal.

Saying these affirmations may feel strange, even silly at first but after a while you won't feel this way and the subconscious mind will begin through repetition to believe what it is being told. Don't give up!

Examples of positive affirmations to help with depression are:

I am at one with myself

I love and approve of myself exactly as I am

I am calm and relaxed

I handle whatever happens

I am confident, assertive and decisive in every situation

My body and mind are healthy

I am full of energy and enthusiasm

When we repeat these affirmations over and over again the subconscious mind believes these messages and tries to make it our reality.

I have noticed that when a depressed person is really working with affirmations they are able to make some really big positive changes in their life. Some of my students have been able to return to work or college because the depression has lifted and they have a new, fresher more positive outlook on life. They handle stress and upsets better. They find that they handle relationships better and life in general is much improved.

Affirmations are a fantastic tool to aid recovery and it is understated how effective they are in alleviating depression. When we are repeating positive affirmations daily we begin to feel better about ourselves which in turn boosts our self esteem.

It is clear that using affirmations alongside visualisations and taking a holistic approach to treating depression can dramatically ease the symptoms of depression and often eliminate depression entirely.

Affirmations can be practiced any time of the day. Before you get out of bed in the morning repeat your affirmations. This is a good start to the day. The key to long lasting change is daily repetition of affirmations. You will soon notice the difference in your mood.