Wellness Wednesday

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5 Ways 'Hidden Depression' Is Sabotaging You From Living Your Best Life - Understanding Hidden Depression

Hidden depression, often referred to as high-functioning depression, can manifest in individuals who appear to be thriving on the outside while struggling internally. This paradox can make it challenging to identify and address the condition, as those affected may continue to fulfill their roles in personal and professional settings without revealing their inner turmoil. Understanding the nuances of hidden depression is crucial for recognizing its signs and taking proactive steps toward recovery.

The Duality of Functioning

Individuals experiencing hidden depression often maintain their responsibilities, whether at work or home. They may excel in their careers, engage in social activities, and appear to be well-adjusted. However, beneath the surface lies a persistent sense of dissatisfaction and emotional pain. This duality can create a cycle of denial, where the individual feels compelled to keep up appearances while neglecting their mental health.

The Importance of Awareness

Awareness is the first step toward addressing hidden depression. Recognizing the signs and symptoms can empower individuals to seek help and make necessary changes in their lives. It is essential to understand that experiencing hidden depression does not equate to weakness; rather, it signifies a need for support and self-care.

Sign #1: Overcommitment to Work

One of the most common indicators of hidden depression is an overcommitment to work. Individuals may pour their energy into their jobs, using work as a coping mechanism to avoid confronting their emotional struggles. While dedication to work can be admirable, it can also lead to burnout and a lack of balance in life.

The Work-Life Imbalance

For those with hidden depression, work often becomes the sole focus of their existence. They may neglect personal relationships, hobbies, and self-care in favor of meeting professional demands. This imbalance can exacerbate feelings of isolation and sadness, further perpetuating the cycle of hidden depression.

Recognizing the Signs

To identify if work is becoming a crutch, consider the following questions:

- Are you sacrificing personal time to meet work deadlines?
- Do you find it challenging to disconnect from work, even during off-hours?
- Is your self-worth tied to your job performance?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, it may be time to reevaluate your relationship with work and consider healthier boundaries.

Sign #2: Loss of Joy in Previously Enjoyed Activities

Anhedonia, or the inability to feel pleasure, is a significant symptom of hidden depression. Individuals may notice a decline in their enjoyment of activities that once brought them happiness, leading to a sense of emptiness.

The Subtle Shift

This loss of joy can be subtle and gradual, making it easy to overlook. Someone might continue to participate in social gatherings or hobbies but find themselves going through the motions without genuine enthusiasm. This disconnect can be alarming, as it often signals deeper emotional issues.

Reflecting on Your Interests

To gauge your level of enjoyment in daily activities, ask yourself:

- Do you still look forward to your favorite pastimes?
- Are you finding it hard to connect with loved ones during social interactions?
- When was the last time you felt true happiness?

If you find that your answers indicate a lack of joy, it may be time to explore the underlying causes and consider seeking support.

Sign #3: Diminished Internal Motivation

Another hallmark of hidden depression is a significant decrease in internal motivation. This can often be misinterpreted as laziness, but it is crucial to understand that it stems from a deeper emotional struggle.

The Cycle of Inertia

Individuals with hidden depression may find themselves starting projects or engaging in activities but struggle to follow through. This inertia can lead to frustration, as they become increasingly aware of their inability to sustain motivation for personal interests or self-care.

Understanding the Roots

To better understand your motivation levels, reflect on these prompts:

- Are you finding it challenging to complete tasks that once excited you?
- Do you often procrastinate on personal projects or self-care routines?
- Are you relying on external factors to motivate you rather than intrinsic desires?

If you resonate with these questions, it may be beneficial to explore the emotional barriers that hinder your motivation.

Sign #4: People-Pleasing Behavior

People-pleasing tendencies can be a subtle sign of hidden depression. Individuals may go to great lengths to meet others' expectations, often at the expense of their own needs and well-being.

The Cost of People-Pleasing

While wanting to help others is commendable, excessive people-pleasing can lead to feelings of resentment and burnout. Those with hidden depression may derive their self-worth from their ability to please others, which can create an unhealthy dynamic in relationships.

Assessing Your Behavior

To determine if you engage in people-pleasing, consider the following:

- Do you often say yes to requests, even when you feel overwhelmed?
- Are you afraid of disappointing others, even at your own expense?
- Do you struggle to assert your needs in relationships?

If you find yourself answering affirmatively, it may be time to prioritize your own well-being and set healthy boundaries.

Sign #5: Persistent Feelings of Inadequacy

Individuals grappling with hidden depression often experience a pervasive sense of inadequacy. This can manifest as a belief that they are not good enough or that their efforts are never sufficient.

The Negative Thought Cycle

This pattern of negative thinking can create a self-fulfilling prophecy, where individuals internalize their feelings of inadequacy and allow them to dictate their actions and decisions. This can lead to a cycle of self-doubt and hopelessness.

Breaking the Cycle

To challenge these negative thoughts, consider these strategies:

- Practice self-compassion by acknowledging your efforts and accomplishments, no matter how small.
- Seek feedback from trusted friends or colleagues to gain a more balanced perspective on your abilities.
- Engage in positive affirmations to counteract feelings of inadequacy. By actively working to combat these negative thought patterns, individuals can begin to reclaim their self-worth and foster a healthier mindset.

Taking Action: Steps to Address Hidden Depression

Recognizing the signs of hidden depression is the first step toward recovery. Once you identify these patterns in your life, it’s essential to take proactive measures to address your mental health.

1. Acknowledge Your Emotions

2. Set Boundaries

3. Engage in Self-Care

4. Seek Professional Help

5. Build a Support Network

Hidden depression is a significant challenge, but recognizing its signs and taking proactive steps can lead to healing and a brighter future. Prioritizing mental health allows individuals to reclaim joy and live fulfilling lives. Remember, seeking help is a strength, and connecting with others fosters growth.

Chocolate Parfaits

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups fat-free milk, dairy-free milk works too
- 2 1/2 tablespoons monk fruit sugar substitute, or sugar of your choice
- 1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 large egg yolks
- 4 ounces semi-sweet baking chocolate
- 1 1/4 cups whipped topping

Chocolate parfaits are a glorious dessert that marries rich flavors with a light, airy texture. These delightful treats can be enjoyed on special occasions or as a simple indulgence after dinner. By crafting homemade chocolate pudding and layering it with whipped cream, you create a dessert that feels luxurious yet is surprisingly easy to make.

The Chocolate Parfait

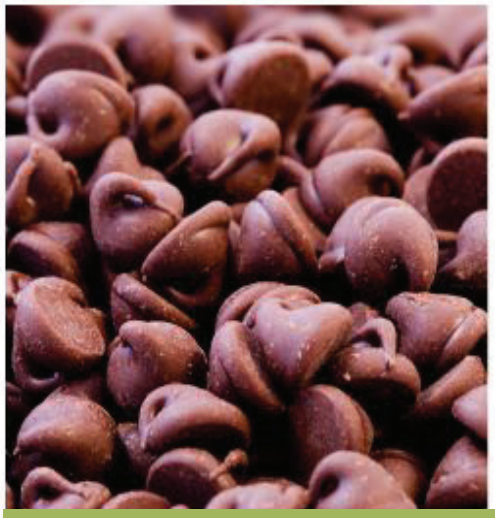
Chocolate parfaits are a layered dessert that typically includes a creamy pudding base and a light topping, often made from whipped cream. The beauty of this dessert lies in its versatility. You can customize it with various toppings, flavors, and even dietary considerations, making it suitable for everyone.

Key Ingredients

Forget the store-bought mix—this homemade chocolate pudding comes together with just a handful of ingredients: sugar-free semi-sweet chocolate, milk, egg yolks, vanilla, and cornstarch. The result? A velvety-smooth, intense chocolaty pudding that tastes luxurious without being overly heavy. Perfect for Valentine's Day or date night! Lactose intolerant? This has been tested with dairy-free milk and it worked great too!

Nutrition Information

Serving: 6 servings, Calories: 182 kcal, Carbohydrates: 28 g, Protein: 6.5 g, Fat: 11 g, Saturated Fat: 7.5 g, Cholesterol: 64 mg, Sodium: 54.5 mg, Fiber: 5.5 g, Sugar: 6.5 g



INSTRUCTIONS

How to Make It

1. In a medium non-stick saucepan, combine milk, sugar, and cornstarch; whisk well and simmer on medium-low heat, whisking constantly until mixture has slightly thickened, about 10 to 15 minutes.

2. In a large bowl whisk egg yolks. Slowly add about 1 cup of the hot milk mixture through a mesh sieve to the yolks, whisking in about a tablespoon at a time to temper the egg so the egg doesn't cook.

3. Once the eggs are tempered, whisk in the remaining milk through the sieve then return to the sauce pan.

4. Melt the chocolate squares in the microwave 20 seconds at a time, up to a minute, stirring in between until the chocolate is melted. Pour melted chocolate into the sauce pan, whisk well.

5. Add vanilla; simmer on low for 15 minutes, whisking constantly.

6. Transfer the chocolate pudding into a large bowl, cover with wax paper, touching the pudding so that it doesn't allow a film to settle on top.

7. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight, it will further thicken in the refrigerator.

8. To make parfaits, when chilled, place 3 tablespoons of the pudding into each glass, then add 2 tablespoons of whipped topping in each, then 2 tablespoons more pudding and top with a dollop of whipped topping.

Reference: SkinnyTaste

https://www.self.com/gallery/core-exercises-top-trainers-swear-by?intcid=inline_amp

Featured Exercise ► Butterfly Sit-Up

HOW TO DO IT:

1. Lie faceup with the soles of your feet together, knees bent out to sides. Reach your arms overhead. This is the starting position.
2. Using your core, roll your body up until you are sitting upright. Reach forward to touch your toes. That's 1 rep.
3. Slowly lower back down to starting position and continue immediately into the next rep.

THE BENEFITS:

1. **Core Strengthening: The primary advantage of the Butterfly Sit-Up is its ability to strengthen the core muscles, including the rectus abdominis and obliques. A strong core is essential for stability and balance in various physical activities.**
2. **Flexibility Improvement: By incorporating the butterfly position, this exercise promotes flexibility in the hips and groin, which can enhance overall mobility.**
3. **Lower Back Support: Strengthening the core can lead to better support for the lower back, potentially reducing the risk of injury during other physical activities.**
4. **Enhanced Posture: Regular practice of the Butterfly Sit-Up can contribute to improved pos ture by strengthening the muscles that support the spine.**
5. **Versatility: This exercise can be easily modified to suit different fitness levels, making it accessible to a wide range of individuals.**

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Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.

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