

Sources of Serious Mood Inconsistencies

Where do disturbances in mood originate? Why do some people experience changes in mood and moodiness, while others do not? That is not an easy question to answer. Because mood inconsistencies are very complex in nature, they usually do not originate from one source. Rather, many things can lead to mood disturbances in people, and often it is not one of the following sources, but a combination of several sources.

Negative Thinking

Distorted, maladaptive, and irrational thinking can cause and enhance feelings of sadness and moodiness. A thorough examination should be conducted of a participant's thought processes as they relate to and affect feelings.

Genetics and Biology

Family history can influence one's predisposition to moodiness. A complete medical and psychological history should be completed to identify family members who may also have experienced periods of sadness.

Uncontrollable Situations

Situations in which people find themselves unable to control the outcomes can enhance feelings of sadness, a loss of interest, and a sense of hopelessness and helplessness. An examination of the situations in which participants experience feelings of moodiness should be conducted by a medical/psychological professional.

Life Events

An inability to cope with major stressors can be a factor in moodiness. Some of the major stressors that often precede mood disturbances include separation and divorce, traumatic shock, legal troubles, feeling stuck in a situation without an exit, loss of a loved one, and loss of a job. An examination of the life events that may be causing sadness and moodiness should be conducted by a medical/psychological professional.

Medical Conditions

People who have medical conditions often experience mood disturbances as a secondary symptom. A participant's medical history can reveal conditions that might induce a mood problem and should be examined by a medical/psychological professional.

Substances

People often experience mood problems from chronic use of alcohol and drugs. An examination of a participant's drug and alcohol abuse should be examined by a medical/psychological professional.

Lack of Social Support

People who have access to a social support system are much less likely to experience severe and extended bouts of sadness. An examination of participant's support system should be conducted by a medical/psychological professional.

Excerpted from *Managing Moods* by Ester Leutenberg and John Liptak, EdD

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