

Depression

Briefing: The patient, a lady in her 40s, a heavy smoker is seeing a psychiatrist in a clinic in Tokyo. She has ongoing depression and is feeling suicidal. The patient part in the dialogues in *italics*.

Seeing a Psychologist

Hi Mona/Rie. Have a seat. How are you today?

Not so good....

Right, have you been going to work as usual?

Yes, but I feel really low in the morning because of my condition.

Right. What about your sleep? Sleeping OK?

Yes. I usually drink some herbal tea before bed, it calms me down.

What about your appetite?

I don't have much appetite. Food doesn't excite me at all but I force myself to eat as I need energy for my work.

What about exercise? Do you feel you can go out for a walk?

I do go for a walk in the evening after work and just before kids go to bed. Although I feel fatigued I tried to push myself. I remember you telling me that it is important to keep consistency in my life and to do set things at set times. To keep me in balance.

I would encourage you to go out for a walk although if you don't feel like it then perhaps make it every second evening instead of every night. The most important thing is not to force yourself to do anything. One step at a time!

Yes...I feel I have not been given tasks at work with high responsibility and that makes me feel like I haven't achieved anything. I often feel worthless. I feel that no one would care even if I died, that no one would miss me...my children would I suppose... I am also anxious about having shortness of breath and needing someone to help me out

My partner never listens to me. It's always about him and his research...he never helps out with children either. I have been telling him to go to couple's counseling but he keeps refusing. He just manipulates me and does whatever he wants...

Right. We did talk about your abusive relationship and the need to emotionally detach. Minimize all contact with your partner and work on making your teenage

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children more independent. Ask them to help out more with bento/sandwiches for school lunches and house chores. You need to prioritize yourself above else. As I say you cannot change your partner but you can change yourself. I understand that separating is not an option now but you may want to think about it seriously in future.

Now, I will prescribe you some anti-depressants. You see when you are depressed serotonin levels drop so it is important to bring those levels up. Please stick to this medication for 2 weeks and then come to see me again.

In addition to some rest and medication, you will need to make some life style changes. I would recommend joining a community club of some sorts like arts, poetry, culture and so forth. Meeting new people will bring some stimulation to your daily routine of work, kids and home.

I was thinking of doing some volunteering work for homeless.

Perfect. That will boost your confidence levels! Helping others is very rewarding. I will book you for counseling as well. Would this afternoon work for you?

Yes please, thank you. I always feel better after talking to the counselor.

Good. See you in 2 weeks then!

Thank you. Bye