

# Why Does Depression Have so Many Symptoms?

## Emotional symptoms

- Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, helplessness, guilt, emptiness, or worthlessness
- Feeling emotionally disconnected from others
- Turning away from other people

## Behavioral symptoms

- Dejected facial expression
- Makes less eye contact; eyes downcast
- Smiles less often
- Slowed movements, speech, and gestures
- Tearfulness or spontaneous episodes of crying
- Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities, including sex
- Withdrawal from social activities

## Cognitive symptoms

- Difficulty thinking, concentrating, and remembering
- Global negativity and pessimism
- Suicidal thoughts or preoccupation with death

## Physical symptoms

- Changes in appetite resulting in significant weight loss or gain
- Insomnia, early morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Vague but chronic aches and pains
- Diminished sexual interest
- Loss of physical and mental energy
- Global feelings of anxiety
- Restlessness, fidgety activity



# Understanding Mood Disorders

## Can we explain...

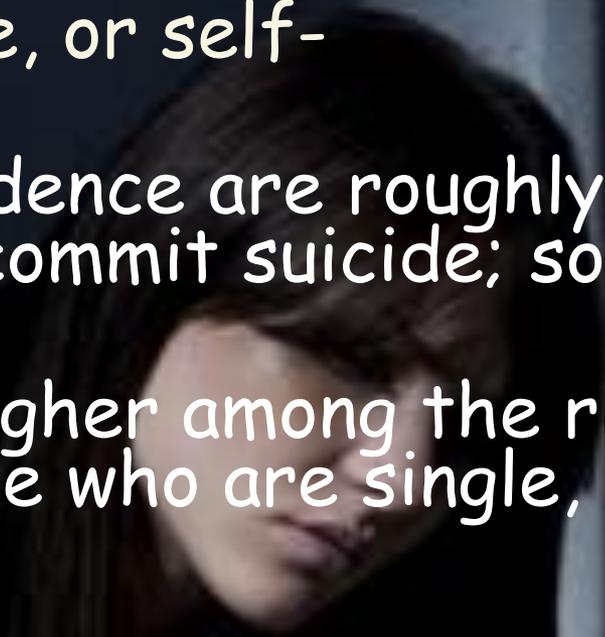
- why does depression often go away on its own?
- the course/development of reactive depression?

Often, time heals a mood disorder, especially when the mood issue is in reaction to a stressful event. However, a significant proportion of people with major depressive disorder do not automatically or easily get better with time.



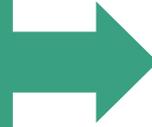
# Suicide and Self-Injury

- Every year, 1 million people commit suicide, giving up on the process of trying to cope and improve their emotional well-being.
- This can happen when people feel frustrated, trapped, isolated, ineffective, and see no end to these feelings.
- **Non-suicidal self-injury** has other functions such as sending a message, or self-punishment.
- Those with alcohol dependence are roughly 100 times more likely to commit suicide; some 3 percent of them do.
- Suicide rates are much higher among the rich, the nonreligious, and those who are single, widowed, or divorced



# Understanding Mood Disorders

**Biological aspects and explanations**



Evolutionary  
Genetic  
Brain /Body

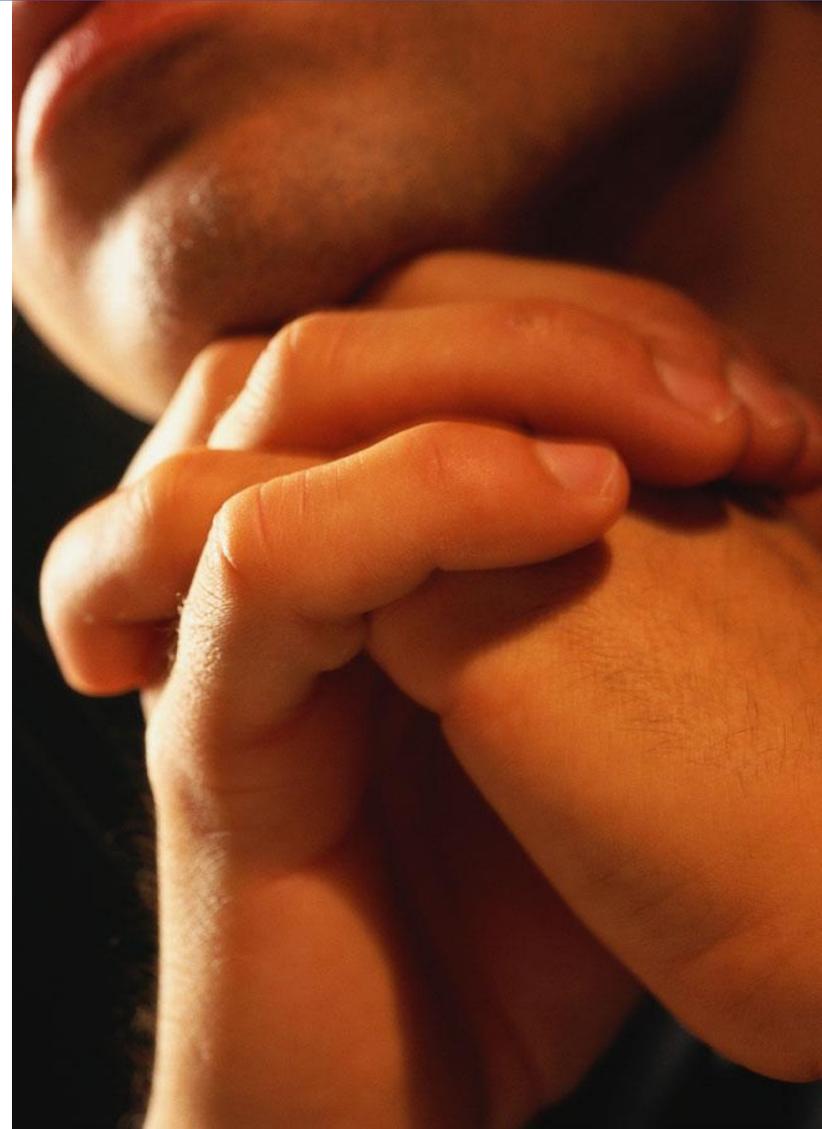
**Social-cognitive aspects and explanations**



Negative thoughts and negative mood  
Explanatory style  
The vicious cycle

# An Evolutionary Perspective on the Biology of Depression

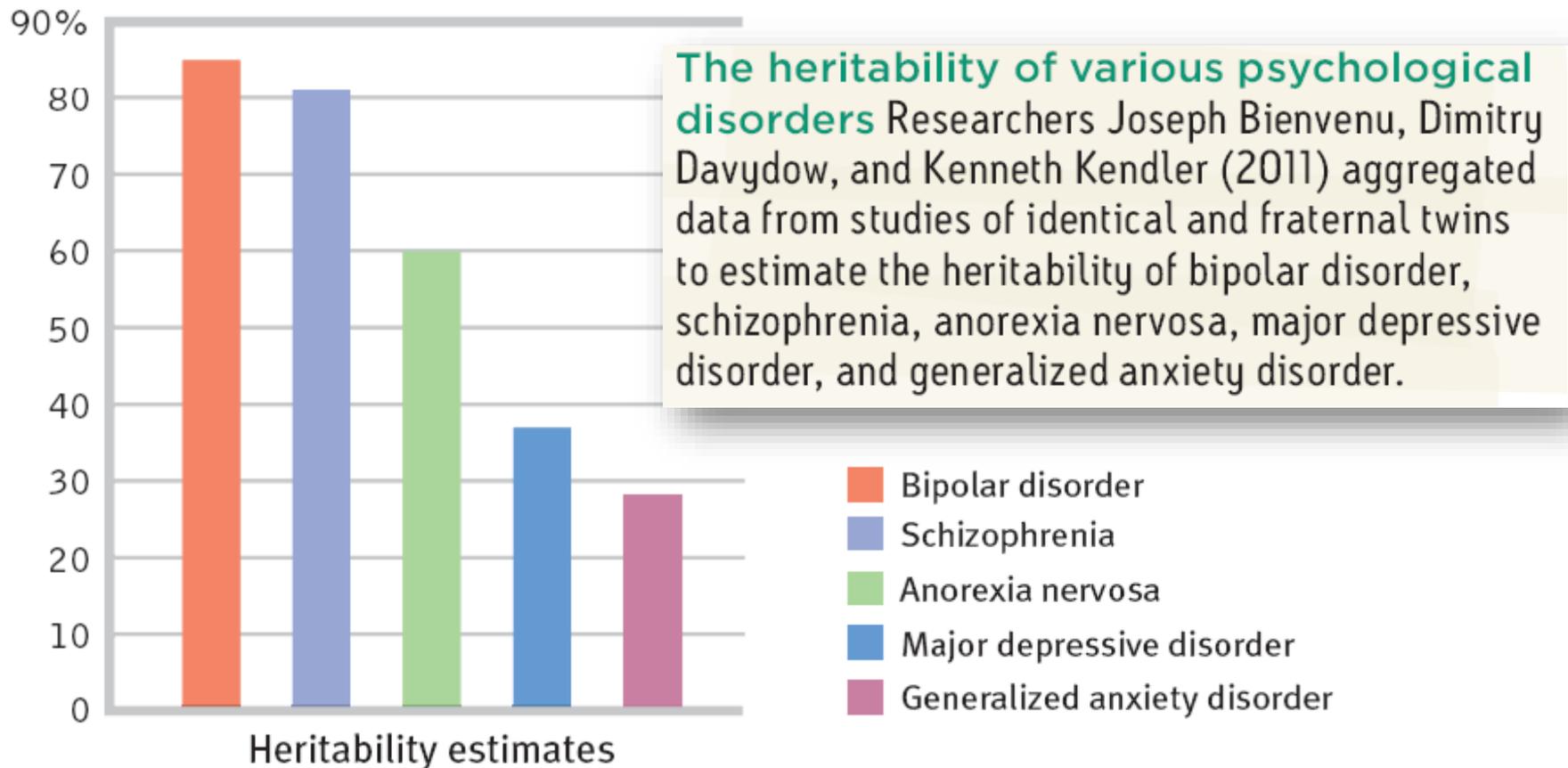
- Depression, in its milder, non-disordered form, may have had survival value.
- Under stress, depression is social-emotional hibernation. It allows humans to:
  - conserve energy.
  - avoid conflicts and other risks.
  - let go of unattainable goals.
  - take time to contemplate.



# Biology of Depression: Genetics

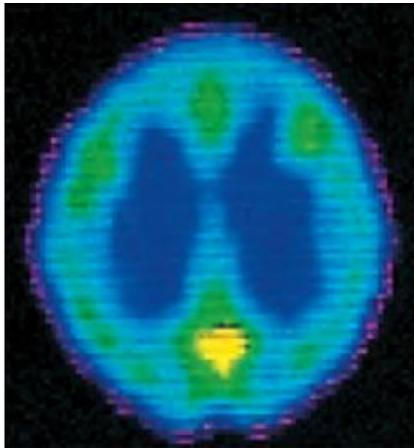
Evidence of genetic influence on depression:

1. DNA linkage analysis reveals depressed gene regions
2. twin/adoption heritability studies

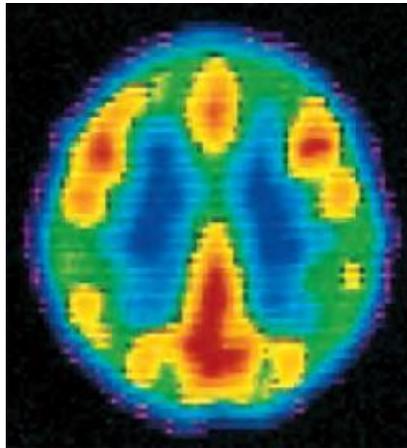


# Biology of Depression: The Brain

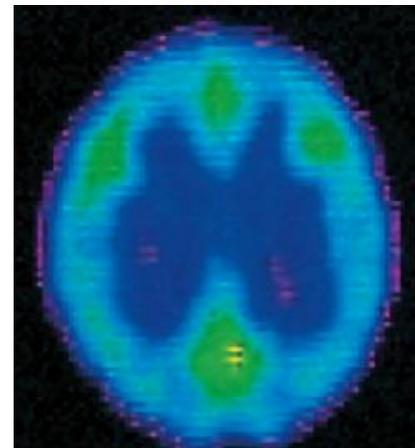
- Brain **activity** is diminished in depression and increased in mania.
- Brain **structure**: smaller frontal lobes in depression and fewer axons in bipolar disorder
- Brain cell **communication (neurotransmitters)**:
  - more norepinephrine (arousing) in mania, less in depression
  - reduced serotonin in depression



Depressed state  
(May 17)



Manic state  
(May 18)



Depressed state  
(May 27)

# Preventing or Reducing Depression: *Using Knowledge of the Biology of Depression*

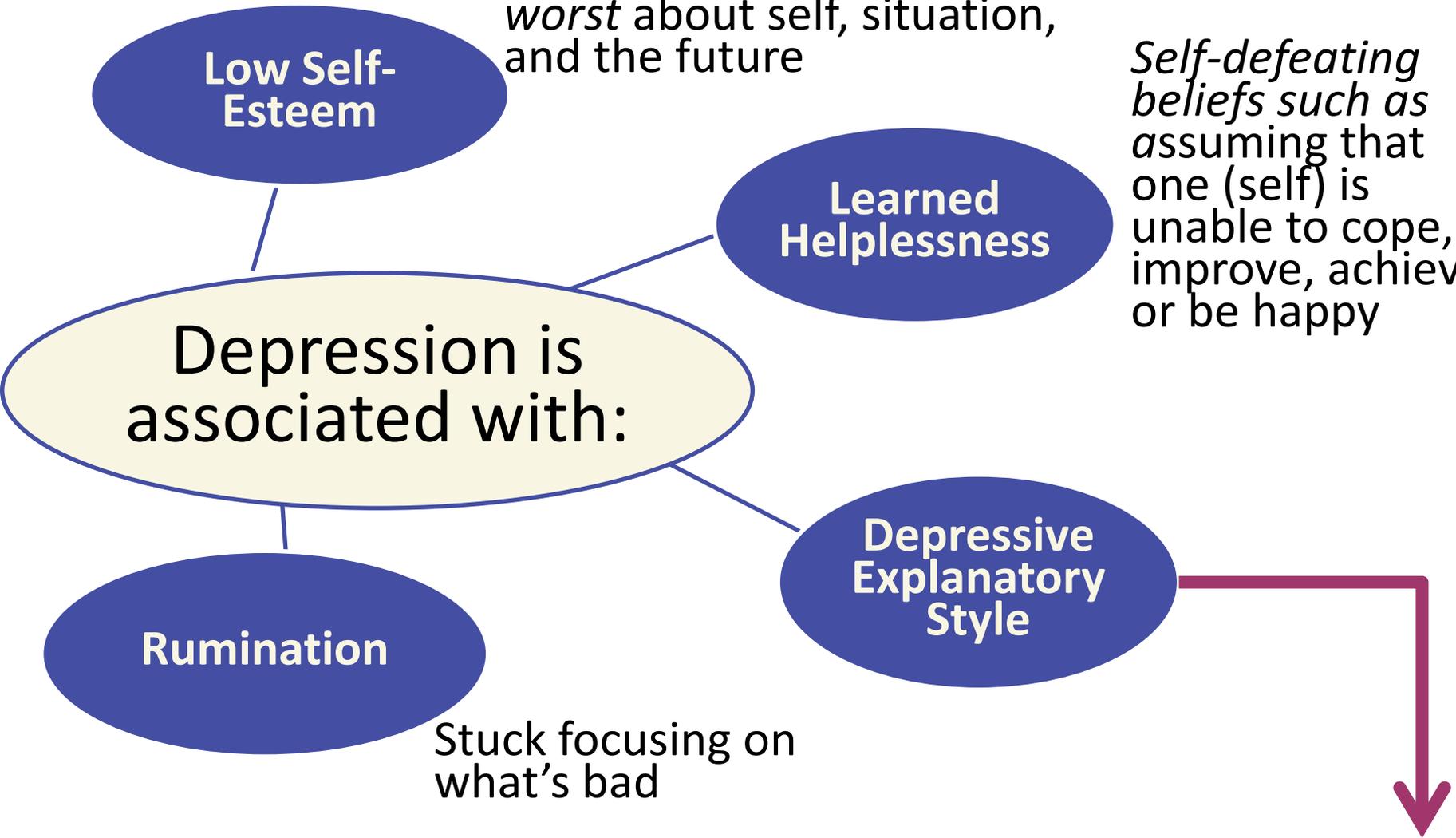
1. Adjust neurotransmitters with medication.
2. Increase serotonin levels with exercise.
3. Reduce brain inflammation with a healthy diet (especially olive and **fish oils**).
4. Prevent excessive alcohol use .



# Understanding Mood Disorders: *The Social-Cognitive Perspective*

*Discounting positive information and assuming the worst about self, situation, and the future*

*Self-defeating beliefs such as assuming that one (self) is unable to cope, improve, achieve, or be happy*



# Depressive Explanatory Style

How we analyze bad news predicts mood.

Problematic event:

Breakup with a romantic partner

Assumptions about the problem

The problem is:

**Stable**  
"I'll never get over this."

**Temporary**  
"This is hard to take, but I will get through this."

The problem is:

**Global**  
"Without my partner, I can't seem to do anything right."

**Specific**  
"I miss my partner, but thankfully I have family and other friends."

The problem is:

**Internal**  
"Our breakup was all my fault."

**External**  
"It takes two to make a relationship work and it wasn't meant to be."

Mood/result that goes along with these views:

Depression

Successful coping

# Depression's Vicious Cycle

A depressed mood may develop when a person with a negative outlook experiences repeated stress.

The depressed mood changes a person's style of thinking and interacting in a way that makes stressful experience more likely.

