Fighting Back Against Depression Caused by Psoraisis

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Anxiety, Depression and Psoriasis

With psoriasis, your diagnosis is front and center. It is available for all to see — and judge.

Most people will not set out to be hurtful, but their ignorance will stand in their way. They will see a person on the bus or standing in line at the grocery store and question the appearance of those red splotches. Their lack of information will lead them towards misconceptions and negative conclusions.

Having a medical condition is usually a personal experience. If you had a fibromyalgia or rheumatoid arthritis diagnosis, you could control the information other people gathered. No one would have to know of your condition unless you told them.

This is not the case of psoriasis. You worry about what other people will think and about psoriasis stigma. You become sad or mad when a new flare presents. More than anything else, though, you get stressed.

Stress is a powerful force. For someone with a chronic medical condition, stress is dangerous. Not only can stress make physical health symptoms worse, but it can trigger new symptoms of mental health conditions.

Because of this added stress, people with psoriasis have rates of depression and anxiety that are much higher than others.

Find Your Starting Point

Mental health symptoms can be challenging to identify. This problem is more complicated when those symptoms begin from a physical source because the slide from healthy to unhealthy can be so gradual.

Slow changes are more difficult to notice. Your current state of being might feel normal only because you have grown accustomed to it.

To deal with the mental health impact of psoriasis, work to track the changes in your mental health. What mental health symptoms presented before, during, and after your psoriasis diagnosis? Consult with trusted loved ones to look for signs of depression and anxiety.

Depression can be marked by any lasting periods of:

- Sadness
- Poor self-esteem
- Low energy and motivation
- Weight or sleeping changes
- Excessive guilt and shame

- Thoughts about death or suicide
- Irritability
- Poor attention, focus, and decision-making

Anxiety can be marked by excessive worry, thoughts that move quickly and endlessly in your mind, jumping to negative conclusions, feelings of fear, feeling tense or rigid, and trouble relaxing.

You may have all the symptoms on each list or only a few. In either case, it is crucial to know where you stand.

Some treatment interventions work for depression and anxiety while most only attack a specific condition. By identifying your symptoms, you can allocate the needed resources to the areas of largest concern.

Think About Your Thinking

Your psoriasis has probably changed the way you see yourself. Rather than imaging yourself as a healthy, capable person, you may now see yourself as someone who is flawed and broken or someone who is judged and mocked by others.

Unfortunately, this point of view will only lead to increased feelings of depression and anxiety. If you want to change the way you feel, you must change the way you think.

Rather than focusing on the negatives, put your attention on the positives of who you are as a person. You are not your diagnosis. You are not psoriasis. You are a fully functioning, multidimensional individual who happens to have psoriasis.

Spend your time and energy rediscovering yourself and your interests. This will shrink the influence of your condition while maximizing your self-respect.

By thinking about your condition, you will grow to accept it. Denial or other problems with acceptance will prove to be barriers to your mental health that complicate your recovery.

Your movement from shock and denial to acceptance will follow a path similar to grief and loss. As you process the loss of your physical health, your mental health will improve. The best part is that action is a natural response. Simply giving yourself permission to grieve will permit the process to occur.

Bonus Tips

- **Feel your feelings.** Your feelings are not something to be feared. If you are angry, be angry. If you are sad, be sad. Allow yourself to be anxious and any other feeling. After letting them out, move the focus to changing them. Otherwise, you could get stuck in your symptoms.
- **Build your defenses.** Build a shield that protects you from ignorance. Remind yourself that you are okay. Seek ways to actively engage the people who seem to be concerned about your condition. Offer education and facts on your psoriasis and reassure them that there is nothing to fear.
- **Calm your body.** The tension that comes with anxiety can leave an unwanted impression on your wellbeing. Explore deep breathing, yoga, mindfulness meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, autogenic training, or guided imagery.
- **Leave the house.** Call friends. Go for a walk. Try that new taco stand that has everyone buzzing. Even though you may encounter some resistance or judgment from people in the outside world, this risk is lower than your own self-loathing.

If you find yourself suffering from emerging or worsening mental health symptoms related to your psoriasis, you may want to seek professional mental health treatment that is designed for your unique needs and circumstances.

Therapy might not make your psoriasis vanish, but it can make a difference in your happiness, worry, and everyday stress. Until your first appointment, try to find success with the skills above. You might be surprised with

your results.