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Question Time: Professional Help

Wrapping up this week on recently asked questions, I saved the most serious question for today. I talked to a number of people who were concerned about themselves, friends, or family members. The simplest way of explaining the questions is to say they or people they knew had medical issues related to nutrition and diet, and the inability to resolve health and eating issues may have contributed to a state of depression and anxiety.

Note that I said “may have.” This is not my area of expertise. I wouldn’t presume that I know enough to be able to say someone is depressed. What I told people, and what I’m telling you, is that the first step is talk with somebody, especially a mental health professional. It could be someone like my best friend from Michigan State who is a licensed professional counselor, or it could be a psychologist or social worker who has the right credentials. If cost is an issue, many colleges and universities have very low cost counseling clinics staffed by grad students and supervised by professors; I know people who’ve gotten a lot of help from university clinics. Some pastors can be helpful if they have the right training. It has to be someone who is an expert in helping you or the person in question.



It’s especially difficult when people aren’t aware there’s a problem. What they’re experiencing becomes the new normal. When I was a college professor, I observed anorexia first hand. Having all rib bones showing and wearing two sweat shirts on an 80-degree day was normal to that student.

Most of the time, things are not as complicated as anorexia, but it can still impact people’s lives. If they can learn to deal with the depression and the anxiety, they may be able to deal with the health or nutrition issue straight on.

It’s tough to know what to do with friends and family who are hurting. You know I always say “when in doubt, check it out.” That doesn’t just apply to heart issues or a lump in your armpit—it applies to all phases of health, and that includes getting professional care for mental issues as well. Life is too short to feel bad all the time.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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