

## Powerful Patient #3

Host: Joyce Graff, WebTalkRadio.net

### Depression

**Depression** is a leading concern of people with nearly any chronic health condition. It's a word that we use all too often. In common parlance, it means feeling down for whatever reason.

Short-term depression is normal. Everyone has ups and downs. Support of family and friends is usually the right medicine.

When a feeling of depression persists for days, weeks, or longer, it may be a condition that needs some medical help. Medically, there are three major categories of depression.

- Adjustment disorder
- Clinical depression
- Bipolar disorder, or manic depressive disorder

In this program we talk about all three, and visit with two people who are living with bipolar disorder.

#### 1) Our Guests

**Connie Francis** was the most popular female singer in the world in the 1960's. By the end of the 1960's she had sold more than 35 million records. Today, she has sold more than 110 million records. She sings in 13 different languages and has recorded more than 70 albums. She is still performing today, and is in production of a film about her life. But did you know that she was also the head of President Reagan's task force on violent crime? She was instrumental in helping to change the attitudes of police and the travel industry toward violent crime against women and personal protection in public accommodations. She shares her feelings about three tragic events, and the courage she found to come back from the edge.

**Jill** from Canada has generously shared her story with us as well. She speaks openly about her ongoing battles with bipolar illness. All the normal challenges that we all go through are magnified and complicated by this condition. Jill's daughter has another very serious bowel disease which has kept her in the hospital about half-time for nearly two years. Jill has cared for her daughter, championing her and advocating for her during this time, all the while managing her own condition in the background. Hear her courageous story.

#### 2) Getting Help for Depression



Joyce Graff with Connie Francis,  
Boston 2007

Dr. Gary Wood, a clinical psychologist who has a chronic illness himself, has provided some very helpful dialogue for people with chronic illness. It is often difficult to tell what is normal, what needs counseling, and what needs medication. I have found these articles very helpful.

- The Emotional Roll-Coaster, a chat with Dr. Gary Wood, <http://vhl.org/support/chat1999/emotrc.htm>
- Coping with VHL, an article he published in the *VHL Family Forum*. This could equally apply to people living with any chronic illness. <http://www.vhl.org/newsletter/vhl2004/04aacope.htm>

For people dealing with more serious forms of depression or bipolar disorder, there are many websites on the internet. Most, however, are sponsored by pharmaceutical companies who would like you to purchase their drug. Be careful to get well-balanced information, and to work with a psychology professional who is right for you.

People with clinical depression may need some anti-depressants but hopefully for short periods of time, and always under the careful supervision of an M.D. psychiatrist – not a family doctor. Please note that the Food and Drug Administration has issued a warning against using anti-depressants with people under the age of 24 as they can increase feelings of suicide. Anyone of any age who is taking anti-depressants should be seeing an M.D. psychologist or psychiatrist once a month, to monitor for these kinds of side effects.

**Here are some of the more authoritative sites:**

*Adjustment Disorder*

- U.S. National Library of Medicine  
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000932.htm>

*Clinical Depression*

- U.S. National Institute for Mental Health  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression/complete-publication.shtml>
- National Alliance on Mental Illness facts about childhood depression  
[http://www.nami.org/Content/ContentGroups/Helpline1/Facts\\_About\\_Childhood\\_Depression.htm](http://www.nami.org/Content/ContentGroups/Helpline1/Facts_About_Childhood_Depression.htm)

*Bipolar disorder (also called manic-depression):*

- U.S. National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH)  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/bipolar-disorder/complete-publication.shtml>
- NIMH on bipolar disorder in children and adolescents  
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/child-and-adolescent-bipolar-disorder/summary.shtml>
- The Mayo Clinic:  
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/bipolar-disorder/DS00356/UPDATEAPP=0>