

## Q & A Mindline



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**Q Please explain the meaning of holistic psychiatry and what it means to patients.**

Holistic psychiatry implies treating the 'whole' person. Here in, the body, mind and conscious (and even unconscious) thoughts, feelings and emotional reactions, as well as interconnectedness to family, friends and the world and finally the soul and the connection to the spirit, all are taken in to consideration in the process of treatment and healing.

A practitioner of holistic psychiatry must be a person who has moved beyond medical sciences, and who is widely read on many/every aspect of human behaviour, spirituality and belief system. He/she must have astute body language and manner, good communication skills and demonstrate objectivity and open mindedness to all problems.

The diagnostic approaches used in this, includes conventional evaluation with an added deep sense of understanding of the person and not just the presenting problem, necessary

laboratory testing and importantly involving the individuals and their family, for an intuitive understanding of the person as a whole with an agreement of an all-encompassing approach.

Therefore, the treatment methods are highly individualized and chosen specifically for the particular patient and not just based on the disease or the symptoms that are present. With regard to the treatment, the holistic approach uses multiple methods to resolve a patient's condition. These methods may include eclectic and specialized psychotherapy, alongside family intervention, lifestyle advice, insight building and awareness work, besides integrated evidence based on medicinal intervention where appropriate.

**Q I suffered from depression four months ago, but I'm doing well now. For how much longer do I take the antidepressants?**

I am glad you have recovered. Now, you need to bring about lifestyle changes including enrolling in an exercise/fitness program or yoga/meditation in order to 'raise the bar,' which means raising the threshold of mind and body, to better handle change and emotional turmoil.

Additionally, be vigilant (not anxious) about early signs of reoccurring depressive features which include persistent poor sleep, loss of interest, tiredness and exhaustion when not much activity is done, as well as pervasive low mood which doesn't abate despite efforts to do so. If there is reoccurrence of depression, then act early in terms of professional consultation for therapy, guidance and/or medication when required.



Duration medicinal treatment depends on nature and degree of depressive episode. Usually, for the first episode one would need to take an antidepressant for up to four-six months after clinical response to treatment. If one is symptoms-free for the above duration then attempts can be made to taper down the dose initially and consider stopping medication if possible, under clinical supervision. For those with two or more episodes of depression, it is advisable to take the medicine between 12-24 months. Any further recurrence may warrant medicine for five years or even indefinitely.

In all cases, individual should receive a minimal required dose during the maintenance phase and medication should be reviewed regularly. Effort must be made to wean of medication following a risk benefit analysis at a clinical consultation. Psychotherapy, must be the core of treatment and intervention for all emotional and psychological problems.

Ask your queries at [bpositiveQA@apollolife.com](mailto:bpositiveQA@apollolife.com)