

Guided life review helps against depression

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Life review, which involves recalling memories and evaluating the past in a structured way, helps to reduce depression and increase feelings of well-being when used in the form of a self-help course under guidance. These are the findings of researchers at the department of Psychology, Health and Technology of the University of Twente, who carried out a study among people over the age of 40 with mild to moderate symptoms of depression. The research has been published in *The Journals of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, a renowned scientific journal

focusing on the psychology of older adults.

The [research](#) showed that life review can be effective when offered as a self-help course under [guidance](#) by email. It also showed life review to be effective in the treatment of both older and middle-aged adults. The course was successful in reducing the symptoms of depression and in increasing feelings of well-being, and the effects were maintained over the long term.

Research design

For the purposes of the research, 174 adults were randomly divided into three groups. One group was provided with the life review self-help course with the guidance of a counselor via email, one group was given an expressive writing course and also received guidance from a counselor via email, and one group was put on the waiting list. The research was innovative in several ways: it was the first time that life review had been looked at in the form of a self-help course, the effects were not only studied in older people, but also in middle-aged adults, and the effects were not only measured immediately after the course, but also at six and nine months following completion.

Provided by University of Twente

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