

Can humor help treat depression and anxiety?

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An analysis of published studies suggests that humor therapy may lessen symptoms of depression and anxiety.

For the analysis, which is published in *Brain and Behavior*, investigators identified 29 relevant studies that included a total of 2,964 participants and were conducted in nine different countries. Participants had depression or anxiety and included children undergoing surgery or anesthesia; [older people](#) in nursing homes; patients with Parkinson's disease, cancer, [mental illness](#), or receiving dialysis; retired women; and college students. Examples of humor therapy included medical clowns and laughter therapy/yoga.

Most participants thought humor therapy lessened their depression and anxiety, but some considered the effect to be insignificant.

"As a simple and feasible complementary alternative therapy, humor therapy may provide a favorable alternative for clinicians, nurses, and patients in the future," the authors wrote.

More information: The impact of humor therapy on people suffering from depression or anxiety: An integrative literature review, *Brain and Behavior* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/brb3.3108](https://doi.org/10.1002/brb3.3108)

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