

Dysthymic Disorder

Ever since his freshman year of high school, Xavier has been bullied by upperclassmen every single school day. They steal his lunch money and make fun of his appearance. Now Xavier is a junior and the bullying hasn't stopped. He frequently comes in late, always looks dull, and rarely interacts with his peers. He can never concentrate in class and barely passes with Cs and Ds.

Someone with **dysthymic disorder** may have an experience like the one above.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, dysthymic disorder (or dysthymia) “is characterized by long-term (2 years or longer) symptoms that may not be severe enough to disable a person but can prevent normal functioning or feeling well. People with dysthymia may also experience one or more episodes of major depression during their lifetimes.”¹

According to MedlinePlus, **signs and symptoms** of dysthymic disorder can include:

- “a low, dark, or sad mood on most days for at least 2 years” in adults. “In children and adolescents, the mood can be irritable instead of depressed and lasts for at least 1 year.”²
- Hopelessness
- Too little or too much sleep
- Low energy, fatigue
- Low self-esteem
- Poor appetite or overeating
- Negative, pessimistic outlook on life
- Difficulties with problem-solving
- Difficulty concentrating²

Bibliography

¹ The National Institute of Mental Health, "Depression." Accessed July 25, 2013.
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>.

² Zieve, David. U.S. National Library of Medicine, "Dysthymia: MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia." Last modified September 17, 2012. Accessed July 25, 2013.
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000918.htm.