

# Victim of servre depressive disorder



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1Betsy's Conclusions 02/25/06 Mark Daily Four common psychological phenomena combine in Betsy's thought process. They do this in a way that might lead her to falsely conclude that she will definitely be a victim of a severe depressive disorder.

The availability heuristic predisposes Betsy to imagine being the victim of a severe depressive disorder because she has witnessed the trials and severity of her brother's battle with depression. The availability heuristic "occurs when people estimate the probability of an outcome based on how easy that outcome is to imagine" (Wikipedia. org, 2006). In Betsy's case she can easily imagine a severe depressive disorder. Her brother has one. Other sources describe the availability heuristic as the "judgment based on what we can remember, rather than complete data"(Straker, 2002-2006). Here, too, Betsy is ripe for succumbing to the availability heuristic on the easily remembered situation of her brother, and the recent data coming from her parents.

Framing contributes to Betsy's anxiety because of the natural tendency of children to believe parents. "Framing is a process of selective control over media content or public communication"(Wikipedia. org, 2006). Probably without realizing it, Betsy's parents have exerted "selective control over media content" by not researching the facts further, thereby leaving Betsy with only two assumed facts; one, her brother suffers from severe depression; and two, there is a 40 percent chance she will also suffer from depression. The parents comment constitutes a "frame" that easily calls to mind the common mis-perception that depressive diseases are hereditary. When in fact, the list of causes determining depressive disorders is lengthy and complicated.

Confirmation bias will add to Betsy's depressing conclusions because it is "a <https://assignbuster.com/victim-of-severe-depressive-disorder/>

phenomenon wherein decision makers have been shown to actively seek out and assign more weight to evidence that confirms their hypothesis, and ignore or under-weigh evidence that could disconfirm their hypothesis. As such, it can be thought of as a form of selection bias in collecting evidence" (Wikipedia. org, 2006). Having a brother with depression is ... well, depressing. So now, the normal feelings of sadness that Betsy feels for her brother's difficult situation play on her mind. She's runs the risk of thinking " they must be right, I do feel depressed".

Belief perseverance adds confirmation to Betsy's conclusion . " Once we have decided that we believe something, we will tend to keep on believing it, even in the face of disconfirming evidence. Particularly if other people know of our belief, it can be embarrassing to climb down from our previous assertions. It is also difficult to remove a belief which has been woven into a wider web of belief, without disturbing those other beliefs."(Straker, 2002-2006) This is especially true in Betsy's case because in order for her to " disbelieve" that she will be subject to severe depression, she will have to confront and oppose her parents as well as set herself apart from her brother as one who does not and will not suffer from severe depression.

An understanding of the definitions of availability heuristic, framing, the confirmation bias, and belief perseverance gives us some insight into the possibilities of Betsy's pessimistic conclusion. Without additional objective research to balance her parents incomplete assumptions, she might indeed conclude that she will definitely be a victim of a severe depressive disorder.

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