In our culture talking about mental illness is a rather recent phenomenon, but the experience of mental illness is as old as human existence. Over the ages various emotional/psychological problems have been given many diverse names (madness, hysteria, "the vapors", lunacy, the blues, melancholia, etc.) and associated with many causes (the moon, being female, especially menstruating women, self-abuse, i.e., masturbation, emotional weakness, religious fervor, and many other explanations).

We still have a relatively poor understanding of psychological illness and in many ways, even though we have a much greater knowledge of the brain and brain chemistry, it has become much more difficult to separate emotional and physical ailments.

Western medicine's reliance on either talk therapy or SSRI medicines (or other antidepressants) offers benefits but often does not address the individual imbalance. The Eclectics were limited by the theories and beliefs of their times, but still attempted to address the specificity of each patient and their "symptom picture". When reading the Eclectic literature, the language is often archaic and a certain amount of translation is necessary. Neurasthenia is nervous exhaustion, mania can be a number of conditions including manic depression, schizophrenia, or post-traumatic stress syndrome. Much of what was called hysteria, we now call PMS/PMDD or, in some cases, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

The following materia medica is primarily drawn from Eclectic sources with an occasional "new" remedy drawn from my clinical experience (i.e., adaptogens, Ginkgo, Mimosa, Bacopa, Rosemary, Lemon Balm).

**Depression**

**Asafoetida gum resin** (Ferula asafoetida) - depression with nervous irritation, hysteria, headache, dizziness, and flatulence. Muscle tightness, ticklish, or painful to the touch. Dose: tincture (1:5) - 5-30 gtt TID

**Black Cohosh root** (Cimicifuga racemosa) - "doom and gloom" depression, hormonal depression - post-partum, menstrual, or menopausal. Use with Cactus. Dose: fresh root tincture (1:2) - 10-15 gtt TID

**Cactus stem** (Selenicereus grandiflorus) - depression with excessive fear, especially useful in menopause, old age, and with heart disease. Dose: fresh plant tincture (1:2) - 10-30 gtt in 4 oz. water, mix. Take 1 tsp. every 2 hours

**Coffee bean** (Coffea arabica) - nervous depression with dull thoughts and constipation. Dose: beverage - 1-2 cups per day
**Cola nut** (*Cola acuminata*) - neurasthenia with mental despondency, foreboding. The patient is quiet or silent about troubles.
Dose: tincture (1:5) - 1-2 ml QID

**Culver's Root/Leptandra** (*Veronicastrum virginicum*) - depression with dull headaches, especially behind eyes, enlarged liver, and clay-colored stools.
Dose: tincture (1:5) 2-5 gtt, every 2-3 hours

**Damiana herb** (*Turnera diffusa*) - mild depression with a marked loss of libido. Depression of the elderly and stagnant depression (use with Lavender and Rosemary).
Dose: tincture (1:5) - 2-4 ml TID
tea - 1 tsp. dried herb, 8 oz. hot water, steep 30 minutes, take 4 oz. TID

**Evening Primrose leaf, root bark, flower** (*Oenothera biennis*) - depression associated with chronic dyspepsia, vomiting, and frequent desire to urinate. Patient apathetic, gloomy, and despondent.
Dose: tincture (1:5) - 2-3 ml TID

**Fresh Milky Oat seed** (*Avena sativa*) - situational depression in type A, hyperactive people emotionally brittle from chronic stress.
Dose: fresh seed tincture (1:2) - 1 tsp. QID

**Ginkgo leaf** (*Ginkgo biloba*) - depression caused by vascular insufficiency due to old age or head trauma injuries.
Dose: extract standardized to 24% flavonoid glycosides - 40 mg. gtt TID
fresh plant extract (1:2) - 3-4 ml QID

**Holy Basil herb** (*Ocimum sanctum*) - stagnant depression - the patient is fixated on a specific traumatic event, fatigue, mental fog. Use with Lavender, St. John's wort, & Rosemary.
Dose: fresh extract (1:2) - 3-4 ml TID
tea - 1 tsp. dried herb, 8 oz. hot water, steep 15 minutes, take 1-2 cups per day

**Lavender flower** (*Lavendula angustifolia*) - mild depression with difficulty thinking, the patient may remark that he/she is in a fog, stagnant depression - the patient is fixated on a specific traumatic event. Lavender mixes well with St. John’s wort, Holy Basil, and Rosemary.
Dose: tincture (1:5) - 2-3 ml TID
tea -1 tsp. dried flowers, 8 oz. hot water, steep 20 minutes, take 4 oz. TID

**Lemon Balm herb** (*Melissa officinalis*) – a wonderful mild mood elevator. Use in combination with St. John's wort, for SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder)
Dose: fresh plant tincture (1:2) - 3-5 ml QID
tea - 1-2 tsp. dried herb, 8 oz. hot water, steep 15-20 minutes, take 2-3 cups per day

**Mimosa flowers or bark** (*Albizia julibrissin*) – a profound mood elevator, useful for deficient insomnia, moodiness, and a broken heart (use with Hawthorn flowers/berries and Rose petals).
Dose: tincture (1:5) – 1-2 ml TID
**Pulsatilla herb** (Anemone pulsatilla) - depression with nervousness, dizziness, and restlessness. Fearful, sad, constant weeping. Frequent exclamations of sorrow or grief.
Dose: fresh plant tincture (1:2) - 20-30 gtt in 4 oz. water, mix. Take 1 tsp. every 2-3 hours

**Rosemary herb** (Rosmarinus officinalis) - dull, lethargic depression, thinking is too much of a bother, constant mental fog. Also for bilious depression (use with Evening Primrose and St. John’s wort).
Dose: tincture (1:5) - 2-4 ml TID
   tea - 1 tsp. dried herb, 8 oz. water, steep 20 minutes, take 4 oz. TID

**St. John’s wort flowering tops** (Hypericum perforatum) - mild to moderate unipolar or situational depression. Dyspeptic outlook, sour stomach, sour attitude. Use with Lemon Balm for SAD.
Dose: tincture (1:5) - 3-4 ml QID

**Syrian Rue herb** (Peganum harmala) - mood elevator for asthenic, tired, deficient depressions.
Dose: tincture (1:5) 30-40 gtt TID

**Tiger Lily bulb & herb** (Lilium lancifolium) - depression with anxiety. Patient fears to be alone. Frequent muttering under the breath, weeping. Often associated with menstrual, menopausal or post-partum depression.
Dose: fresh plant extract (1:2) - 20 gtt in 4 oz. water, mix. Take 1 tsp. every 2-3 hours

**White Baneberry root** (Actea alba) - depression in women caused by hormonal imbalances with insomnia, headache, spasticity, and especially ovarian tenderness.
Dose: tincture (1:5) - 10-15 gtt in 4 oz. water, mix. Take 1 tsp. every 3 hours

**Adjuncts to Antidepressant Herbs**

The following adaptogens can be used as adjuncts along with antidepressant herbs for depression associated with exhaustion, HPA depletion (dark rings under the eyes, quivering tongue) and chronic illness, i.e., CFIDS, fibromyalgia, autoimmune disease, etc.

- American Ginseng root (Panax quinquefolius)
- Asian Ginseng root (Panax ginseng)
- Ashwagandha root (Withania somnifera)
- Cordyceps fungus (Cordyceps sinensis)
- Dang Shen root (Codonopsis pilosula)
- Jiaogulan herb (Gynostemma pentaphyllum)
- Licorice rhizome (Glycyrrhiza glabra)
- Rhodiola root (Rhodiola rosea)
- Schisandra berry (Schisandra chinensis)
- Siberian Ginseng root/stem (Eleutherococcus senticosus)

**Anxiety**

**Bacopa fresh herb** (Bacopa monnieri) - anxiolytic, especially useful for "cloudy thinking", mental confusion with anxiety, and nervous exhaustion with agitation.
Dose: tincture (1:2) 2-4 ml TID
**Black Haw bark** (*Viburnum prunifolium*) - anxiety associated with pregnancy. Use with Avena.
Dose: fresh tincture (1:2.5) 2-4 ml TID
tea - 1-2 tsp. dried bark, 8 oz. water, decoct 15 minutes, steep 1/2 hour, take 4 oz. QID

**Blue Vervain herb** (*Verbena hastata*) - PMS or menopausal anxiety, anxiety with nervous tics, tremors, or spasms. Use with Leonurus and Pulsatilla.
Dose: tincture (1:5) 1-2 ml QID

**Cactus stem** (*Selenicereus grandiflorus*) – the patient is nervous, sleepless, there is oppression in the chest and dyspnea, he/she fears some important function will cease (heart, breathing, death, etc.).
Dose: tea - 10-30 gtt in 4 oz. water, mix. Take 1 tsp. every 2-3 hours.

**California Poppy fresh root & herb** (*Eschscholtzia californica*) - useful in patients with excess/hyper insomnia, with anxiety, nervous tension, and stress headaches.
Dose: tincture (1:2) - 1.5-3 ml 3-4 times per day

**Fresh Milky Oat seed** (*Avena sativa*) - nervous exhaustion - neurasthenia with anxiety, irritability, and labile emotions. Emotionally brittle.
Dose: fresh seed tincture (1:2) - 4-6 ml QID

**Hops strobile** (*Humulus lupulus*) - nervous irritability or mild anxiety with wakefulness or gastric upset.
Dose: tincture (1:5) - 2-3 ml TID

**Kava root** (*Piper methysticum*) - anxiety with muscle tension, bruxism, restless leg syndrome, and pain.
Dose: tincture (1:5) 2-3 ml QID

**Mimosa flowers or bark** (*Albizia julibrissin*) – anxiety or irritability, emotionally brittle patients. Mimosa calms disturbed shen (bad dreams, fears).
Dose: tincture (1:5) – 1-2 ml TID

**Motherwort herb** (*Leonurus cardica*) – is an excellent nervine and anxiolytic. Use with Verbena hastata for PMS, menstrual, & menopausal anxiety. Add Pulsatilla for anxiety attacks.
Dose: tincture (1:2.5) – 2-4 ml TID

**Passion Flower herb** (*Passiflora incarnata*) - irritation of the brain, nervousness, restlessness, sleeplessness with muscle twitching, or circular thinking.
Dose: fresh tincture (1:2) - 30-40 gtt TID
tea - 1-2 tsp. dried herb, 8 oz. hot water, steep 45 minutes, take 1-2 cups per day

**Scurllcap herb** (*Scutellaria lateriflora*) - nervousness or spasms due to mental overwork or physical exertion. Nervousness without apparent cause. The patient gets angry and "flies off the handle".
Dose: fresh tincture (1:2) - 2-4 ml. TID
**Tiger Lily bulb & herb** (*Lilium lancifolium*) - depression with anxiety. Patient fears to be alone. Frequent muttering under the breath, weeping. Often associated with menstrual, menopausal or post-partum depression.
Dose: fresh plant extract (1:2) - 20 gtt in 4 oz. water, mix. Take 1 tsp. every 2-3 hours

**Valerian root** (*Valeriana officinalis*) – the patient is restless, nervous, and agitated with a pale face and cool skin.
Dose: tincture (1:2) 2-4 ml TID

**Hysteria**

**Asafoetida gum resin** (*Ferula asafoetida*) – hysteria with headache, dizziness, and flatulence. Muscle tightness, ticklish, or painful to the touch.
Dose: tincture (1:5) - 5-30 gtt TID

**Lobelia fresh herb or seed** (*Lobelia inflata*) - hysteria with muscle tension, the jaws are locked, or they have bruxism. Muscle spasms - hiccoughs and torticollis.
Dose: tincture - fresh herb (1:2) - 10-20 gtt TID/QID
seed (1:5) - 5-15 gtt TID/QID

**Eli Jones' Formula for Hysteria**

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\text{Asafoetida, Valerian, Cypripedium (replace with Eschscholtzia root), Lobelia)}
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Dose: 20 gtt of each in 4 oz. water, mix, and take 1 tsp. as needed

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