



## RECOGNISING DEPRESSION

Sometimes it can be difficult to know whether you or someone you know is feeling down or stressed or whether it's depression, anxiety or a related disorder.

Depression is more than just a low mood - it's a serious illness. While we all feel sad, moody or low from time to time, some people experience these feelings intensely, for long periods of time and often without reason. People with depression find it hard to function every day and may be reluctant to participate in activities they once enjoyed.

Depression is one of the most common of all mental health problems. One in five people experience depression at some stage of their lives.

Depression is more than just a low mood – it's a serious illness. People with depression find it hard to function every day. Depression has serious effects on *physical* and *mental* health.

### How do you know if a person is depressed and not just sad?

A person may be depressed, if **for more than two weeks** they have:

- a) Felt sad, down or miserable most of the time.
- b) Lost interest or pleasure in most of their usual activities.

And experienced a number of these symptoms:



#### Behaviour

- Stopping going out.
- Not getting things done at work.
- Withdrawing from close family & friends.
- Relying on alcohol and sedatives.
- No longer doing things they enjoyed.
- Unable to concentrate.

#### Thoughts

- "I'm a failure."
- "It's my fault."
- "Nothing good ever happens to me."
- "I'm worthless."
- "Life's not worth living."

#### Feelings

- Overwhelmed
- Guilty
- Irritable
- Frustrated
- No confidence
- Unhappy
- Indecisive
- Disappointed
- Miserable
- Sad

#### Physical

- Tired all the time.
- Sick and run down.
- Headaches & muscle pains.
- Churning gut.
- Sleep problems.
- Loss or change of appetite.
- Significant weight loss or gain.

In most cases depression will go on for weeks or months. If left untreated if it isn't properly treated, depression is highly likely to reoccur.

## What makes a person more at risk of depression?

Some events or situations have been linked with depression:

- Family conflict.
- Isolation or loneliness.
- Unemployment
- Having a serious medical illness
- Drug and alcohol use
- Changes in the brain
- Having a family member with depression.

It's important to remember that each person is different and it is often a combination of factors that puts a person at risk of depression.

## How common is depression?

*Very common.*

Around one million Australian adults & 160,000 young people live with depression each year.

On average, one in five females & one in eight males will experience depression in their lifetime.

## What are the treatments for depression?

Depression is often not recognised or treated. Different types of depression require different types of treatments. This may include physical exercise for preventing and treating mild depression, through to psychological and drug treatments for more severe levels of depression.

## Useful contacts

- **Beyond Blue** – 1300 224 636  
<https://www.beyondblue.org.au>
- **Blackdog Institute** – 02 9382 4530  
<http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au>
- **Lifeline** – 13 11 14  
<https://www.lifeline.org.au>
- **SANE Helpline** – 1800 18 SANE (7263)  
<https://www.sane.org>
- **Your Local GP**
- **Your Local Hospital**

Reference:

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008). *2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing*:

*Summary of Results* (4326.0). Canberra: ABS.

**For further information and advice contact the Workers Health Centre**



# WORKERS HEALTH CENTRE

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