



Depression

Understand the facts

Everyone's experience of depression is different. Feeling sad, moody or low from time to time, is a normal emotional response to life events. However, some people experience these feelings intensely, for long periods of time (weeks, months or even years) and sometimes without any apparent reason. That is when it is important to see a licensed health care professional and discuss possible treatment plans and approaches.

Assess

- Has your behavior changed? For example, you have stopped doing things you used to enjoy, you avoid social settings and contact with family and/or friends, you rely on alcohol and medication, you have difficulty concentrating, your eating habits have changed.



Assess (continued)

- Have you experienced ongoing changes in sleep – getting too much or too little?
- Do you feel guilty, overwhelmed, irritable, frustrated, unconfident, unhappy, indecisive or sad?
- Do you think thoughts such as “I’m a failure”, “I’m worthless”, “Life’s not worth living” or “People would be better off without me”?
- Are you constantly tired, feeling sick and run-down?
- Do you have a physical health condition triggering sleep concerns or problems?



Self-care

- Make time for regular exercise, whatever form is comfortable for you.
- Maintain more regular sleep patterns.
- Maintain healthy, nutritional eating habits.
- Practice mindfulness meditation, such as deep breathing exercises. Learn self-calming techniques.
- Reach out and engage your family, friends and other positive social outlets.
- Live in gratitude: write 2-3 things you are grateful for each day.
- Spend some time outdoors in natural settings.



Reach out

- Contact the [Employee Assistance Program](#) for free, confidential counseling services.
- Speak to your primary care physician if you are unsure where to start.
- Speak to a trusted friend or family member.
- Join a local support group or online forum.
- Be open to treatment options which may include therapy and/or medication.
- Explore other types of therapies: cognitive behavioural approaches, behaviour activation, creative arts and animal-assisted therapies.



Need more information?

- [Harvard Medical School Special Health Report – Understanding Depression.](#)
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America:
<https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/depression>.
- Beyond Blue:
www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/depression.
- Heads Up: www.headsup.org.au/your-mental-health/mental-health-conditions.
- National Alliance on Mental Illness:
www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Depression.