

Low Mood / Depression

What is depression?

We can all feel down from time to time. Feeling depressed is a bit different in that it tends to last longer than a couple of weeks, and is marked by low mood, significant decrease in enjoyment or interest in activities, feeling worthless or guilty, memory and concentration problems, and changes to your appetite, sleeping patterns, or libido.

Who gets depression?

Recent research suggests that 1 in 5 Australian adults will suffer from depression at some stage in their lives.

The cycle of depression

You may already know that people who are experiencing depression show characteristic patterns of low self-esteem, pessimism, feelings of hopelessness and disinterest in most things. Unfortunately, these things tend to feed on each other and intensify the depression, creating a vicious cycle of depression.

Common thinking patterns that contribute to depression

- Negative outlook – about themselves, their future, the world in general
- Unchangeable – lose hope that things will never get better
- Internalise – believe the situation is their fault
- Black and white thinking – seeing things in absolutes
- Catastrophising – making things appear worse than they really are

Common behaviours that contribute to depression

- Avoidance (of people, activities they usually enjoy) → leads to feeling worse
- Feeling worse → leads to avoidance of people and enjoyable activities

Get HAPPIA

For an easy-to-remember yet effective guide to recovering from **mild to moderate** levels of depression try using our 'Get HAPPIA' strategy. In addition, it is also recommended that you seek professional assistance. For severe depression, seek professional assistance.

If you have not resolved the cause of the depression than it is important that you deal with this issue as well.

Hope

- Do things that give you hope. What inspires you to have hope?
- Usually having control/influence over their situation increases hope
- start making plans and carry them out → Short term or long term (e.g., travelling)

Achievement

- Do things that give you a sense of achievement or satisfaction (no matter how small)
- Start small and gradually build (e.g., clean your wardrobe)
- i.e., do something, rather than nothing

People connections

- Stay connected with people (even if you don't feel like it)
- Reach out to people if you feel isolated (write an email, phone call, facebook chat)

Pleasure

- Often it is hard to find pleasure in anything anymore
- Think of it as an unused muscle – it needs to be exercised
- Start doing things which you found **some** enjoyment doing
- Ask others if you can't think of anything you enjoy doing

Inspiration

- Find things that inspire you
- It is sometimes easier to focus outwards, to others, rather than inwards on ourselves

Active

- Be physically active if you aren't already
- Getting out of bed is a good start
- Go for a walk, play soccer with a friend, etc