

# Depression

## *A Step In The Right Direction*

Depression is a common condition affecting 1 in 5 women and 1 in 8 men. Sometimes we feel 'down' for no reason at all. However, depression can become an illness when symptoms last for more than 2 weeks, the mood state is severe or when it interferes with the ability to function at home or work. The onset of depression can be caused by multiple factors which include genetics, biochemical elements, illness, ageing, gender, stress and personality.

**It is important to recognise some of the symptoms of depression.**

### Behaviour

- Loss of interest or pleasure in normal activities
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Relying on alcohol or sedatives

### Physical

- Change in sleep patterns, that is, insomnia, broken sleep, or oversleeping
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Diminished sex drive
- Trouble concentrating, making decisions and remembering things
- Feeling tired, or lacking in energy

### Feelings & Thoughts

- Lowered self-esteem
- Reduced motivation, things seem meaningless
- Reduced capacity to experience pleasure: you can't enjoy what's happening now, nor look forward to anything with pleasure. Hobbies and interests drop off
- Less ability to control emotions such as pessimism, anger, guilt, irritability and anxiety
- Varying emotions throughout the day, for example, feeling worse in the morning and better as the day progresses
- Persistent thoughts of failure & worthlessness



## Where Can You Go For Help?

**Employee Assistance Program:** is a confidential, short term assistance program provided by qualified professionals. This service is available to all employees, for both work-related and personal problems where you may need assistance, support or guidance.

**General Practitioner:** Your GP can discuss medical or other support options with you. If you don't already have a local GP you can search for clinics in your area via: Health Engine, <https://healthengine.com.au>

**Skilled Health Professional:** Talk to your trusted health professional about your experience with depression, or you can find additional information on seeking help via:

**BlackDog Institute:** <http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/public/gettinghelp/overview.cfm>

**BeyondBlue:** 1300 22 4636 (24hrs, 7 days) OR <http://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/find-a-professional>

**TIP:** Ask the receptionist to schedule a double appointment time with your health professional so that there is plenty of time to discuss the situation without feeling rushed.

**Inner Circle:** Alternatively, you can also speak with your manager, a supportive family member, close friend or colleague for support.

**Conversation Starters:** If you are having trouble finding the words to open a conversation about your feelings try some of these conversation openers.

*"I've been pretending things are going okay, but I'm actually feeling very low...."*

*"I am feeling tired and irritable all the time...."*

*"I'm not coping, and I need help figuring out what to do about it...."*

*"I might get upset talking to you about this, but I just want to let you know that I have depression..."*