

FACT SHEET 1: Depression



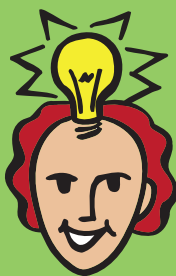
WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Everyone can feel sad. Most of us can feel miserable or down in the dumps some of the time. Usually, these feelings go away after a little while.

Sometimes these feelings are strong. Sometimes they stop us from doing the things we like to do. Sometimes they last longer than a month. When this happens it is called depression.



It is helpful for people with depression to understand a few things about it.



- It is not something to feel guilty about.
- It is not something to be embarrassed about.
- It does not mean that the person is weak.
- It is not something that the person can snap out of
- Depression can go away, or improve, with time and the right support.

WHAT DOES HAVING DEPRESSION FEEL LIKE?

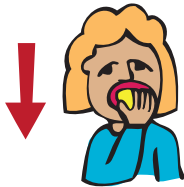
You may be depressed if you are feeling sad and down most of the time. You may have lost interest in your favourite things. You may also notice changes in the way you think, feel and act. Some of these changes may be ...



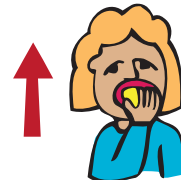
Not sleeping



Sleeping too much



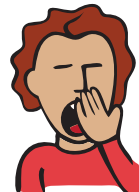
Not feeling like eating



Eating too much



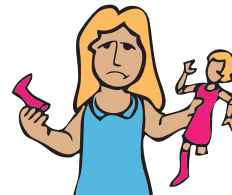
Thinking about death a lot



Not feeling like doing much



Blaming yourself a lot



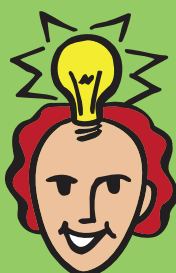
Feeling useless



Feeling jumpy



Finding it hard to decide things



REMEMBER everyone may feel these things sometimes. A person who is depressed feels them a lot. They also feel them for a long time.

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE DEPRESSION?

Depression is common. About 1 in 5 people will have depression at sometime in their life.



WHAT CAUSES DEPRESSION?

Depression is usually caused by more than one thing. For each person the causes of depression will be different.

Some of the causes of depression may be:



Someone you care about dying



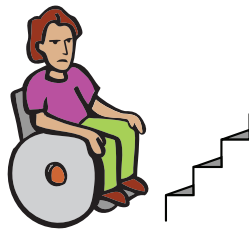
Stress



Feeling lonely for a long time



Having a lot of fights with people in your family



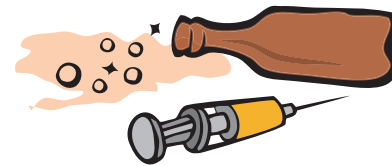
Living with a disability



Having a sad childhood



Having a medical illness like cancer



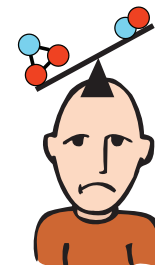
Using drugs and alcohol



Brain damage



Dealing with having a disability

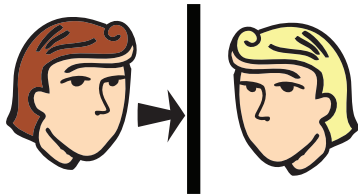


Changes in the body

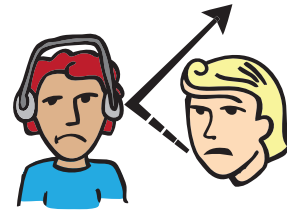
Sometimes it is hard to work out why someone is depressed.

DISABILITY AND DEPRESSION

People with disabilities sometimes have more stressful things in their lives than people without disabilities. The more stress people are under, the more chance they may become depressed. Some of these stressful things may be:



Not being able to communicate



Not being understood



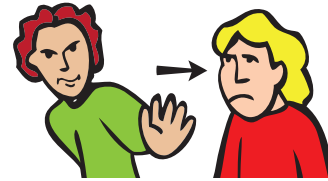
Having few friends



Having not much to do



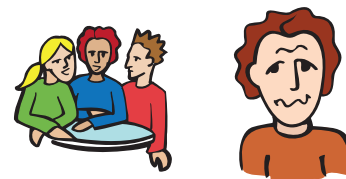
Not feeling in control



Being discriminated against



Unhappy life experiences



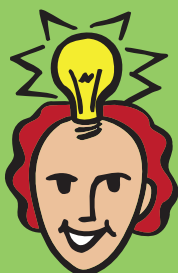
Not feeling included in things



Money problems



Health problems

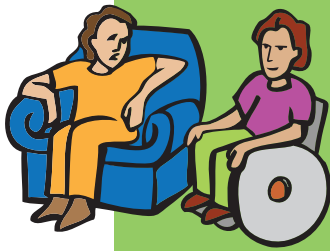


REMEMBER that everyone is different. Just because there are a lot of stressful things in someone's life, it doesn't mean that that person will get depressed.

TYPES OF HELP

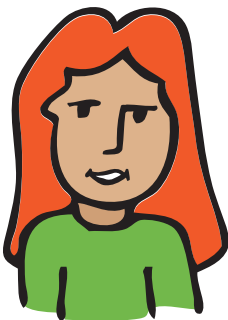
People with depression can be helped.

There are two main ways of helping someone with depression. These are psychological treatment and medication. Sometimes both of these are used to help people.



PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT

Psychological treatment is when a person talks to a Psychologist in a structured way. Psychologists know how to talk to someone with depression in a way that helps them. They may help you ...



- Change the way you think
- Learn how to solve problems
- Learn how to stick up for yourself
- Learn how to relax
- Do more things you like to do
- Find friends that can help you
- Make changes in things like eating, sleeping and keeping fit
- Stop the depression from coming back.



MEDICATION TREATMENT

Sometimes people who have depression take medicine. This medicine helps with depression. However, medications do not fix the problems that make us depressed.

Each person needs to find the treatment that's right for them.



WHERE TO GET HELP

People with depression may need to get help.

Talking with someone you trust can be a good place to start.

You may need to get help from someone like a doctor or Psychologist.

You should always get help if you are feeling like hurting yourself. If you feel like this make sure you are not on your own.

In an emergency you can do one of these things ...



Call your Doctor



Call Lifeline if you live in Australia
on 131114



Go to a hospital

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER



REMEMBER many people have depression

REMEMBER depression does not mean you are weak

REMEMBER people with depression can be helped



This Fact Sheet is linked to the work of the Bridging Project. The Bridging Project is being undertaken by Scope in collaboration with the Centre for Developmental Disability Health Victoria, Monash University. The mission of the Bridging Project is to progress the knowledge and resource base to ensure that people with complex communication and mental health needs have access to quality services. The project has two complementary streams, Building Evidence (increasing the evidence base in relation to individuals with complex communication and mental health

needs through research and related activities) and Building Capacity (building the capacity of services to address the mental health needs and preferences of individuals with complex communication needs). The project is designed around the needs of people who are 18 years or older.

More information regarding The Bridging Project can be found at the Scope Web Page, <http://www.scopevic.org.au>