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Depression

Strong feelings of sadness are a normal and healthy response when faced with a significant loss, illness, disability, life transition or relationship change. When a person's sadness doesn't go away and they find it hard to do the things they normally do this might be called depression. Everyone experiences depression differently and symptoms vary from one person to the next. **One in five people experience depression in their lives. Depression can be treated.**

Some **symptoms of depression include:**

- ◆ Feeling sad, down or miserable most of the time
- ◆ Loss of interest and enjoyment in usual activities
- ◆ Decreased ability to focus on work and relationships
- ◆ Isolating yourself from others
- ◆ Persistent negative thoughts
- ◆ Changed sleeping patterns (either much more or much less sleep)
- ◆ Finding it difficult to relax
- ◆ Increased use of alcohol, drugs, gambling or other addictive behaviours

If you or someone you care about is experiencing depression **it might be helpful to:**

- ◆ Talk with someone about how you are feeling; about what is happening in your life at the moment; about your fears and about the losses and changes you have experienced in your life. Some people find that talking with their friends or family about these things is helpful. Other people find they need more support than that and find it helpful to consult a counselor.
- ◆ Certain medications can be helpful in treating depression. Medication can be a cure in itself for depression or it can be used in conjunction with other strategies. You will need to talk with your GP or psychiatrist if you are considering this.
- ◆ If you can figure out what is contributing to your depression, work towards identifying what you can change and accepting what you are not able to change.
- ◆ As much as you are able to, stay connected to people who are supportive and who you feel comfortable around.
- ◆ Accept that you feel depressed, that you can't just choose to 'snap out of it' and get a plan about how you will manage your experience of depression.

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- ◆ Work towards having a balanced and healthy lifestyle including recreation, exercise and relaxation.

Please feel free to contact Life Supports on 1300 735 030 if you would like to discuss your situation with a professional counsellor. You can find more information about Life Supports services by visiting www.lifesupports.com.au.