

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 may be a sign of 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
- Isolation from others
- Persistent negative thoughts
- Changed sleeping patterns (either much more or much less sleep)
- Changed eating patterns (overeating or loss of appetite)
- Difficulty relaxing
- 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. Some people find that talking with their friends or family about these issues is helpful. Others may need further support and may find it helpful to consult a counsellor.
- Certain medications can be helpful for 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 the use of medication.
- 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, stay connected to people who are supportive and around whom you feel comfortable.

- Accept that you feel depressed, that you can't just choose to 'snap out of it' and try to devise a plan as to how you will manage your experience of depression.
- Work towards having a balanced and healthy lifestyle incorporating 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