

While all of us experience normal feelings of unhappiness or sadness from time to time, clinical depression is a more serious state of depressed mood which is present all or most of the time, for at least 2 weeks. Depression is common and affects up to one in four people at some time in their lives.

Causes

- Depression can be the result of a combination of biological, genetic, psychological and social factors can contribute to its development. People who have a history of depression among close family members may have an increased risk of developing depression due to genetic factors. People with personalities characterised by low self esteem, perfectionism, self criticism or high levels of sensitivity may also be more prone to developing depression.
- Significant life events such as a job loss, family separation or other negative or traumatic events may trigger an episode of depression.
- Ongoing stressful situations such as abusive relationships, work stress or social isolation can cause depression over time.
- Bio chemical changes in the brain have also been identified as a cause of depression.
- A serious medical illness combined with the ongoing worry and stress associated with the illness can lead to depression.
- Some medications, illegal drugs and alcohol abuse can worsen depression, while at the same time also making it more difficult to treat if substance abuse is used as a coping mechanism.

Contact us on 6223 56 12 to make an appointment with one of our Counsellors.

For more information about depression, visit:

beyondblue
Black Dog Institute
Sane Australia
Headspace

www.beyondblue.org.au
www.blackdoginstitute.org.au
www.sane.org
www.headspace.org.au

Symptoms

- Emotional symptoms of depression include feeling sad, hopeless or depressed most of the time; loss of interest or pleasure in normal activities; becoming socially withdrawn from friends and family; feelings of worthlessness or guilt; crying for no apparent reason; or suicidal thoughts or plans.
- Physical symptoms include low energy, fatigue and reduced activity; sleep problems (e.g. getting to sleep, staying asleep or sleeping excessively); digestive problems; changes in appetite or weight; reduced sex drive (libido). Other symptoms include difficulty concentrating and making decisions.
- Symptoms of anxiety are also common in people who have depression as the two conditions often occur together.
- **Contemplating or planning suicide indicates a need for urgent help. In a crisis phone Lifeline on 13 11 14, or go to the nearest hospital emergency department or call an ambulance (dial 000).**
- Anyone who has felt down and sad for more than two weeks, and has experienced other symptoms noted above, should consider making an appointment with their doctor or counsellor.