



Depression, anxiety and related disorders are treatable conditions from which most people recover.

### STAGES OF RECOVERY

Recovery is an individual process with stages that people move through at different rates. However, there are some common emotions that many people may experience.

- 1. Shock** at having to deal with something difficult and scary of which the person has no prior experience.
- 2. Denial** or difficulty in accepting having a health problem, particularly one that many people find hard to understand.
- 3. Despair** and **anger** about why the person has to deal with this condition and the related difficulties.
- 4. Acceptance** of having a condition and the changes it brings, and accepting how others see the person and how he/she sees himself/herself.
- 5. Coping** – Finding new ways to live with and tackle the changes and challenges that having depression, anxiety and related disorders may require.

### AVAILABLE HELP

There is no one proven way that people recover from depression, anxiety and related disorders. However, there is a range of effective treatments available and many health professionals who can give advice and assistance while the person is on the road to recovery.

#### Medical treatment

Medical treatment may be provided by a doctor who is a General Practitioner (GP), a psychiatrist or case manager at a community mental health service, clinic or hospital. This treatment often includes medication such as antidepressants. For some people, medication is needed for a short period of time and psychological treatments and self-help techniques may be sufficient. For others, in order to stay well, antidepressants are needed on an ongoing basis – in the same way someone with diabetes would use insulin or someone with asthma would use respiratory medication.

#### Psychological treatment

Psychological treatment is what people often refer to as 'talking therapy'. Psychological treatment can help people with depression, anxiety or related disorders to change negative thoughts and feelings and find ways to stay well. This type of treatment is provided mainly by psychologists. To find a psychologist, visit the *beyondblue* website [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) and click on Get Help, then Find a Doctor or other Mental Health Practitioner or call the *beyondblue* info line on 1300 22 4636 (local call). For more information see *beyondblue* Fact Sheet 4 – Types of help available and *beyondblue* Fact Sheet 5 – Why use both psychological treatments and medications?

#### Support

Mutual support groups for people with depression, anxiety and related disorders are conducted by people who have experienced similar problems. They can provide an opportunity to share experiences and find new ways to deal with difficulties. These groups can be found by contacting your local community health centre or the mental health association/foundation in your state or territory.

#### Family and friends

Family and friends can play an important role in a person's recovery. They can offer support, understanding and help. They can be a source of support by:

- being more caring and less critical
- relieving the person of some of their daily responsibilities
- helping to identify stressful situations at home or work
- assisting the person to find new ways of solving practical and emotional problems
- being aware of changes in the person's symptoms.

# Recovery

## FACT SHEET 15

### WHAT PEOPLE CAN DO TO HELP THEMSELVES RECOVER

While medical and/or psychological treatment can help a person recover, there are many ways people can help themselves.

#### Get to know the triggers and find ways to manage them

There are situations or events that can increase a person's chances of having another episode of depression, or 'relapsing' as it is often called. These situations or events are called 'triggers'. Common triggers include:

- family problems
- financial difficulties
- changing living arrangements
- changing jobs or losing a job
- having other health problems
- the loss of a close relationship
- changing treatment
- using alcohol and other drugs.

Trying to avoid these triggers can be an important part of recovering. If the person can't avoid these triggers, they should try to learn how to manage them.

#### Learn new ways to reduce and manage stress

Simple things can help a person get through the tough times. For example:

- keep a diary of feelings and every now and then take time to look through it and note any progress made
- practise breathing and muscle-relaxation exercises
- learn how to let people know about current feelings.

#### Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Eating healthily, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep and avoiding alcohol and other drugs can help a person manage symptoms of depression, anxiety and related disorders.

#### Develop a plan

Developing a weekly plan can help the person make sure they get everything done that's important, while avoiding doing too much and becoming stressed. Completing the table below can help develop a balanced routine. When filling it out, it's a good idea to make sure there's enough time for:

- exercise
- sleep
- regular meals
- participating in enjoyable activities
- appointments with a doctor or other health professional.

Time	Monday	Tuesday
Morning		
Afternoon		
Night		





### WHERE TO GET HELP

- **A doctor** who is a General Practitioner (GP) is a good first step. In some cases, the person may be referred to a mental health specialist like a psychiatrist or psychologist. For a list of GPs with expertise in treating depression, anxiety and related disorders visit the *beyondblue* website [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) and click on Get Help, then Find a Doctor or other Mental Health Practitioner or phone the *beyondblue* info line – 1300 22 4636 (local call).
- **Psychiatrists** are doctors who specialise in mental health. They can make medical and psychological assessments, conduct medical tests and prescribe medication. Some psychiatrists use psychological treatments. For more information see *beyondblue* Fact Sheet 5 – Why use both psychological treatments and medications?
- **Psychologists, Social Workers and Occupational Therapists** specialise in providing non-medical (psychological) treatment for depression and related disorders. A rebate can now be claimed through Medicare for psychological treatments when a GP, psychiatrist or paediatrician refers a person to a registered psychologist, social worker or occupational therapist. A rebate can be claimed for part of the cost for up to 12 individual consultations (18 in exceptional circumstances) and 12 group sessions in a calendar year. For more details, ask the referring medical practitioner. For a list of mental health professionals who provide psychological treatment for which a Medicare rebate can be claimed, go to the *beyondblue* website: [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) and click Get Help, then Find a Doctor or other Mental Health Practitioner.

#### ***beyondblue: the national depression initiative***

**[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)**

Information on depression, anxiety and related substance-use disorders, available treatments and where to get help

#### ***beyondblue* info line 1300 22 4636**

Information on depression, anxiety and related substance-use disorders, available treatments and referral only (local call)

#### **[www.youthbeyondblue.com](http://www.youthbeyondblue.com)**

*beyondblue*'s website for young people – information on depression and how to help a friend

#### **Suicide Helpline – Victoria**

**1300 651 251 or [www.suicidehelpline.org.au](http://www.suicidehelpline.org.au)**

24 hour counselling, crisis intervention, information and referral (local call)

#### **Suicide Call Back Service**

**1300 659 467**

Telephone support for those at risk of suicide, their carers and those bereaved by suicide

#### **Mensline Australia**

**1300 789 978 or [www.menslineaus.org.au](http://www.menslineaus.org.au)**

24 hour support for men with family and relationship problems, especially associated with family breakdown or separation – this service provides confidential telephone support, information and referral (local call).

#### **Lifeline**

**13 11 14**

24 hour counselling, information and referral (local call)

#### **Lifeline's Information Service**

**1300 13 11 14**

Rural Mental Health Information Service

#### **Moodgym**

**[www.moodgym.anu.edu.au](http://www.moodgym.anu.edu.au)**

Online psychological therapy

#### **Climate.tv – interactive e-health**

**[www.climate.tv](http://www.climate.tv)**

Developed by medical experts, this is a self-management system for people with depression and anxiety.

#### **CRUFAD**

**[www.crufad.org](http://www.crufad.org)**

Information about depression, anxiety and its management

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PO Box 6100, Hawthorn West VIC 3122

T: (03) 9810 6100

*beyondblue* info line 1300 22 4636

F: (03) 9810 6111

E: [bb@beyondblue.org.au](mailto:bb@beyondblue.org.au)

W: [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)