

Printed copies of this text are not controlled. Always check the CIT website - cit.edu.au to ensure this information is correct.

Tips for Wellbeing Series No 2

Depression

Steps towards feeling better

What is Depression?

While we all feel sad, moody or low from time to time, some people experience these feelings intensely, for long periods of time (weeks, months or even years) and sometimes without any apparent reason. Depression is more than just a low mood – it's a serious illness that has an impact on both physical and mental health.

Depression affects how people feel about themselves. They may lose interest in work, hobbies and doing things they normally enjoy. They may lack energy, have difficulty sleeping or sleep more than usual. Some people feel irritable and some find it hard to concentrate. Depression makes life more difficult to manage from day to day.

What can be done about it?

- > Consult a GP or counsellor to assess the type of depression and the appropriate treatment.

Mild and/or non-melancholic depression responds best to counselling therapy, along with lifestyle changes and self-help.

Tips for lifestyle changes:

- > Maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating healthily, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep and avoiding harmful levels of alcohol and other drugs.
- > Learn how to relax by exercising, meditation, reading, gardening or listening to music.
- > Family and friends can provide important support and understanding.
- > Relationship difficulties and conflicts need attention if they are contributing to unhelpful feelings.
- > Take control of excessively long work hours.
- > Learn how to say no to too many commitments.
- > Some alternative treatments may be helpful if the Depression is not life threatening.
- > Support groups can provide an opportunity to share experiences and find new strategies for dealing with difficulties.

- > Learn to relax by using Breathing techniques or Progressive muscle relaxation.
- > There are a variety of on-line therapies and self-help apps available (see list below)

Severe and/or melancholic depression responds best to medication, with assistance from counselling for support:

- > Antidepressant medication may be prescribed after careful assessment and consideration in consultation with your doctor.
- > There are many different types of antidepressant medication and their effectiveness differs from person to person.
- > It will take at least two weeks for an antidepressant to begin to work.
- > Some experimentation may be necessary in order to find the right medication and dosage for you.
- > Psychological treatment or talking therapy may involve looking at changing your thoughts, improving your relationships, identifying stressors and supports.

Further References

Websites:

- > *beyondblue* - beyondblue.org.au
- > *Black Dog Institute* - blackdoginstitute.org.au
- > *Mood Gym* - moodgym.anu.edu.au
- > *mentalhealthonline* – mentalhealthonline.org.au
- > *BluePages, depression information* - bluepages.anu.edu.au

Books:

- > *Change Your Thinking* by Sarah Edelman (2006) ABC Books.
- > *10 Best-Ever Depression Management Techniques: Understanding How Your Brain Makes You Depressed and What You Can Do to Change It* by Margaret Wehrenberg (2011) W.W.Norton Books.

Want to make an appointment with CIT Student Support staff? Call our reception on **(02) 6207 3290**.

Find more helpful CIT Student Support information on **eLearn** :

Click **Student Links** tab then **Student Services and Support** option at the top of any eLearn page.

Studiosity – 24/7, 365 days a year, online help with assignments and written work:

Click the **Study HELP** tab at the top of any eLearn page.