

## Medical treatment for depression

Medication is often used in treating seriously depressed people and may bring relief within 2–3 weeks.

Family doctors are often the first people contacted when seeking professional help. Your doctor may refer you on for special help.

Psychiatrists are medical doctors with special training in helping those with emotional and psychological problems. They can diagnose illness, prescribe medication, and counsel patients.

## What to do if you (or someone you know) has symptoms of depression

- Understand the facts about depression, causes, types and treatments.
- Recognise the symptoms and determine their severity and how long they have lasted.
- Set small goals that help you to get out and do things. Just achieving small things each day can help.
- Avoid extra stress or big changes, they can create too much tension.
- Get some exercise to help work off bottled up tension, to help you relax and sleep better.
- Talk to a professional counsellor who can help you get started on the road to recovery.

As with most illnesses, treatment of the symptoms of depression is easiest and most effective when it's begun EARLY.

The ideas and strategies outlined in this brochure are often beneficial, but are not comprehensive. Assistance from a professional counsellor may help you to make quicker progress. Remember to use your workplace EAP as a resource.

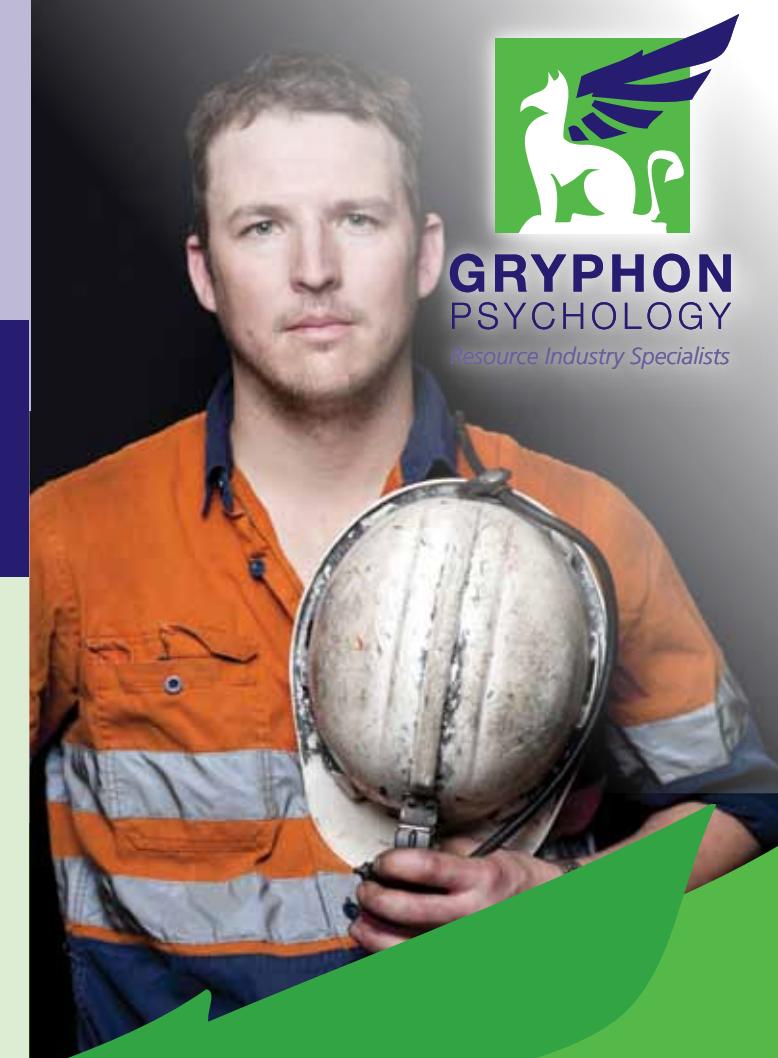
# Call your EAP on 1800 056 076

Gryphon Psychology provide a free professional, independent and confidential counselling and consulting service. This service assists employees in both the private and public sectors to find solutions to any work or personal/family problems that are affecting their quality of life and which may be impacting on their effectiveness at work. If needed, our counsellors can make referrals to specialist agencies for particular problems, or for ongoing support.

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is completely confidential, and provided by your employer at no cost to you.



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## Coping with Depression

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[www.gryphonpsychology.com](http://www.gryphonpsychology.com)

■ Always where you need us

**Depression is no mere slump in mood. Feeling down or sad is a natural reaction to tension and stress and is commonly called “the blues”. However, when the gloom is prolonged and intense, there can be a lot of negative impacts on your personal and work life.**

Depression is a common problem that can affect anyone — in fact; one in five Australians are likely to experience a significant period of depression at some time. Depression may occur following exposure to certain life events, especially those involving loss such as divorce, unemployment, ill health, or death of a relative / friend.

## Coping with someone who is depressed

At times, those who are depressed can be slow to recognise that they are either not coping or not travelling well. When this happens to a depressed family member, co-worker or friend, it is often useful for us to suggest or even initiate some form of help or treatment for them. Recognising depression and knowing what to do to benefit the depressed person can be an invaluable support which may prevent unnecessary suffering for them and those involved in their life.

## What do we know about depression?

Depression is often ignored or left untreated. Often people do not recognise their symptoms, are too depressed to take action, or are afraid to seem “weak” or “unworthy”. Left untreated, everyone involved with the depressed person may suffer as a result of disruptions to work, family relations and social life.

But, DEPRESSION CAN BE TREATED SUCCESSFULLY. Most people can start to feel well again within a few weeks.

## What causes depression?

We do not yet know the clear causes of depression, although we do know that one or more factors may be involved in causing and maintaining the problem. The following factors may increase the likelihood of someone you know and care about being depressed:

### Environmental Stress

Problems at work or home that create prolonged and/or intense periods of conflict, stress and/or tension.

Loss of, or separation from, a loved one.

### Biochemical Factors

Hormonal or chemical imbalances in the brain influence mood and can cause depression. This may include an inherited predisposition where there is a history of depression in the person's family. Illness, infection, alcohol or other drugs can also lead to depression.

### Personality Type

People who are highly self-critical, very demanding or unusually passive and dependent may be prone to depression. Some people tend to be pessimistic and focus on problems rather than consider solutions. There may be a negative mind-set with central thoughts such as: *“Things will never change for me”*, *“Everything is going badly”*, *“It’s all my fault”*.

## How would I know if someone is depressed?

There is a broad range of symptoms that people may experience. Depression affects a person's physical wellbeing, thoughts, feelings and behaviour, and you may see the following symptoms:

### Body

- Unexplained aches or pains
- Reduced energy/tiredness
- Increase or decrease in eating habits
- Poor sleep pattern.

### Feelings

- Helplessness
- Irritability
- Prolonged sadness
- Emptiness.

### Behaviour

- Withdrawal from social activities
- Reduced ability to give/receive love and affection
- Lowered sex drive and sexual activity
- Self-neglect/self-harm
- Inappropriate and frequent crying.

### Thoughts

- Poor concentration/memory
- Low sense of self-worth
- Negative self-talk
- Pessimism (all is bleak)
- Self harm/suicidal thoughts or actions.

## Psychological treatment for depression

Qualified counsellors (psychologists and social workers) work one-to-one helping the person talk out underlying issues to their problems. The goal is to overcome depression through support and help, examining any underlying causes and working out possible solutions.

The aim is not only to overcome the current episode, but also to prevent reoccurrence of depression in the future.