

If you are the support person for someone suffering from depression, it is important that you take him or her seriously. Listen to them, reassure them and let them know how important they are. Encourage them to keep active and acknowledge their efforts. It is important to also encourage them to seek professional help especially if you are worried that they may harm or injure themselves.

Where to go for more help

If you are worried or feel as though you are not coping, it is advisable to see a General Practitioner (GP). They can help with advice on depression and may arrange for you to see someone who can help you further. If a person is severely depressed, antidepressant medication may also help him or her to recover more quickly. Antidepressants are not addictive and can help correct the chemical imbalance in the brain. A GP can talk to you about antidepressants and prescribe this medication if needed.

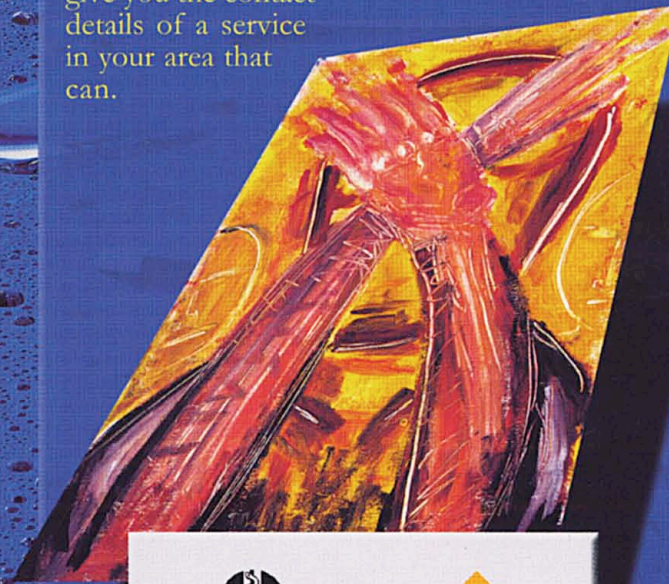


Artwork Miranda Costa
"Clockwork Time For a Future Program", Geelong

More information

- Talk to a GP.
- Talk to a School Counsellor.
- Call Life Line on 131 114.
- Call Kids Help Line on 1800 55 1800.
- Call your local Community Health Centre (look under Health Services in the information pages at the front of the white pages).
- www.reachout.asn.au
- www.thesource.gov.au
- www.sane.org
- www.healthinsite.gov.au

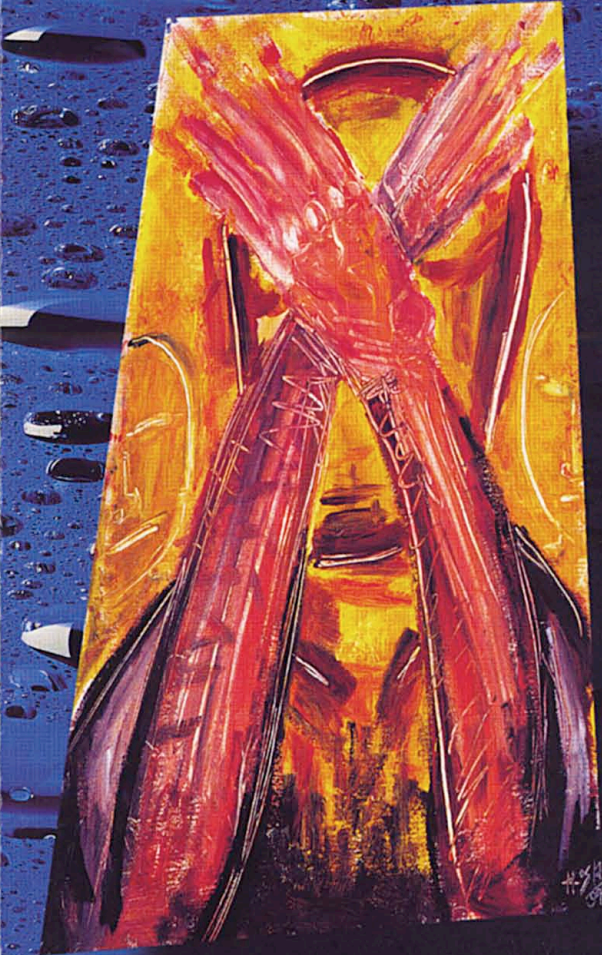
If these services can't help you they can usually give you the contact details of a service in your area that can.



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FEELING DOWN

Make Informed Choices



Depressed?

Most people feel 'down in the dumps' every now and then. It is common for young people to feel unsure about themselves, sad or 'depressed'. It is a normal reaction to things in life that are stressful or difficult to deal with.

If these feelings go on for a long time and start to affect other parts of a person's life, including school or work, then that person may be experiencing depression. Depression is more than just a normal mood swing; it significantly affects the way someone feels. In addition to feeling down most of the time, people with depression often have more frequent illnesses, they sometimes have morbid thoughts or may want to injure or harm themselves as a result.

Causes of depression

Personal

People who are under a lot of stress and do not have much support or someone to share their problems with, are more likely to become depressed.

Family conflict, a death or loss of someone you love, neglect, abuse, bullying or being sick, can all trigger depression. Many changes in your life occurring at the same time may also cause depression.

Biological

Depression is also linked to a chemical imbalance in the part of the brain thought to control mood. This changes the way the brain normally functions and causes many of the signs and symptoms of depression.

What are the signs?

- Becoming withdrawn – avoiding friends, family and regular activities
- Feeling unhappy, miserable and lonely a lot of the time
- Being moody and irritable – easily upset, sensitive, tearful or 'ratty'
- Feeling hopeless, helpless and wanting to die
- Difficulty concentrating and being forgetful
- Difficulty going to sleep, waking up early, or sleeping too much
- Feeling tired and unmotivated
- Being critical of yourself - feeling guilty or blaming yourself
- Getting angry or getting into trouble a lot

Effects of depression

Depression can effect all aspects of a person's life, including:

- Problems getting on with family and friends
- Loss of friends
- Loss of confidence and inability to make decisions
- Inability to study, work and do well in exams
- Difficulty getting out of bed in the mornings
- Eating problems - either eating too much (eg comfort eating) or dieting excessively
- An increase in the risk of drug and alcohol misuse
- An increase in the risk of injury and self harm

What can I do?

If you are feeling depressed remember you are not alone

Depression is a common problem and can be overcome. There are lots of people who can help any time of the day or night.

Talk to someone

If you are feeling down it is important to talk to someone you trust. Talking to someone else may help you look at problems differently, which will lighten the load and make it easier to sort out practical solutions.

Keep active

Keep occupied. Do things you usually enjoy and keep in touch with family and friends. Exercise regularly and eat healthy food. Go for a walk instead of having a cigarette.