

Practical ways to help

People with depression often don't see the point of doing anything and may feel that no one can really help them. Helping someone who isn't ready to recognise they need assistance may be very difficult.

You can help someone by:

- Spending time talking about their experiences
- Indicating that you've noticed a change in their behaviour
- Letting them know you're there to listen without being judgmental
- Quietly suggesting a doctor or mental health professional may be a good idea
- Assisting them to make an appointment and/or going with them to see the health professional
- Following up by quietly asking them "how did your appointment go"
- Talking openly about depression and assisting them to find information
- Encouraging exercise, eating better and becoming involved in social activities
- Keeping in touch and encouraging close friends and family to do the same.

It's unhelpful to:

- Pressure them to 'snap out of it', 'get their act together' or 'cheer up'
- Stay away or avoid them
- Tell them they just need to stay busy or get out more
- Pressure them to party more or wipe out how they're feeling with drugs or alcohol
- Assume the problem will just go away.

The Trans-Help Foundation
are pleased to have an affiliation with



Working together Trans-Help and Beyond Blue are pleased to provide this valuable information about depression to ensure the correct information gets to those who may be in need

beyondblue
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Help Line
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**Support for
Australian Truckers
& their families
when in need**

*Depression in the
Transport Industry*



Understanding

1300 787 996

Depression is nothing to be ashamed of and the chances are the bloke you just had lunch with may have it.

Depression within the Transport Industry is more common than many realise, on average one in five people in society are affected by this medical condition. Undetected or ignored can result in a long term illness.

Understanding depression

Depression is more than just a low mood - it's an illness. People with depression find it hard to function daily. Depression affects physical and mental health.

How do you know if a person is depressed and not just sad?

A person may be depressed, if for more than two weeks they have...

1. Felt sad, down or miserable most of the time, or
2. Lost interest or pleasure in most of their usual activities.

They may experience symptoms in at least three of the following categories:

1) Behaviours

- Stop going out
- Not getting things done at work
- Withdrawing from close family and friends
- Relying on alcohol and sedatives
- No longer doing things they enjoyed
- Unable to concentrate

2) Thoughts

- 'I'm a failure'
- 'It's my fault'
- 'I'm worthless'
- 'Life's not worth living'

3) Feelings

- Guilty
- Irritable and frustrated
- No confidence
- Unhappy
- Indecisive
- Disappointed
- Miserable and Sad

4) Physical

- Tired all the time
- Sick and run down
- Headaches and muscle pains
- Churning gut
- Sleep problems
- Loss or change of appetite
- Significant weight loss or gain

In most cases, depression will go on for weeks or months if left untreated. If not properly treated, depression is highly likely to recur.

What makes a person more at risk of depression? Some events or situations have been linked to:

- Family conflict
- Isolation or loneliness
- Unemployment
- Medical illness
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Brain and chemical changes
- Depression often runs in families.

It's important to remember that each person is different and it is often a combination of factors that puts a person at risk of depression.

What are the treatments for depression?

Depression is often not recognised or treated. Different types of depression require different types of treatments.

Psychological treatments

Psychological treatments deal with problems that particularly affect people with depression, such as changing negative patterns of thinking or sorting out relationship difficulties.

- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) is used to correct negative thought patterns.
- Interpersonal Therapy (IPT) is used to improve relationships.

Medications

People who are depressed often feel physically unwell.

- Antidepressant drug treatments relieve the physical symptoms of depression.
- Drug treatments for depression are not addictive.

Many people worry about the potential side effects of antidepressant medication. It's important to know that when depression isn't treated effectively, physical health often gets worse.

The most important thing is to find a treatment that works.

Many things that people try don't treat the cause of the illness. For example, sleeping tablets or simple counselling are ineffective, even though they may provide temporary relief.

There is a range of treatments that are proven to work. Each person needs to find the treatment that's right for them.

What can be done to help?

People with depression don't get better on their own! They may need to get help with the support of their family and friends.

It's not always easy to know how to help someone who may be experiencing depression. It can be hard to know what to say or do. Here are some tips.

1. Talk to the person about how they're feeling.
2. Listen to what they're saying – sometimes, when a person wants to talk, they're not always seeking advice,
3. Maintain eye contact and sit in a relaxed position – positive body language will help you both feel more comfortable.
4. Use open-ended questions such as 'So tell me about...?' which may require more than a 'yes' or 'no' answer.
5. If your conversation becomes difficult or the person you're talking to gets angry: stay calm; be firm, fair and consistent.
6. Often, just spending time with the person lets them know you care.
7. Encourage the person to seek professional help from their family doctor or a similar health professional.
8. Take care of yourself. Supporting someone with depression can be demanding, so make sure you take some 'time out' to look after yourself.