

## DID YOU KNOW?

- | Around 5-15% of Canadians experience a depressive disorder in any given year.
- | Depressive disorders can strike any kind of person at any stage of their life.
- | Some people experience only one depressive episode in a lifetime, but for most, depressive disorders recur. With effective treatment, recurrences are less likely to happen.

## COULD YOU BE DEPRESSED?

Depression involves much more than feeling sad or unhappy.



### COMMON FEELINGS/EMOTIONS

- Sadness
- Lack of interest
- Irritability
- Guilt
- Anxiety



### COMMON THINKING PATTERNS

- Dwelling on the negative *"Nothing ever goes my way."*
- Hopelessness/despair for future *"Why bother? It won't help me."*
- Helplessness/being trapped in the current situation *"There's nothing I can do."*
- Thoughts of being a personal failure *"I've messed up everything. I don't deserve to be happy."*
- Unhelpful thoughts about self and others *"Why should anyone care about me anyway?"*
- Thoughts of being better off dead *"I'm a burden. It would be better if I just died."*



### COMMON PHYSICAL CHANGES

- Disrupted sleep (especially early morning awakening)
- Tiredness/lethargy
- Appetite changes
- Weight loss/gain
- Reduced sexual interest
- Difficulty concentrating



### COMMON BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS

- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Stopping activities or hobbies that used to be enjoyable
- Falling behind on day-to-day responsibilities at home, school or work

Only physicians, psychologists or other qualified health professionals can diagnose depression. If you are concerned that you - or a loved one - might be depressed, consult a professional to help clarify the situation and connect you with treatment if needed.

# DEFEAT YOUR DEPRESSION

Depression isn't something you can just "snap out of." Yet with the right approach, you can feel better.

- | Antidepressant medications can be helpful for some people, especially those with more severe symptoms.
- | Psychotherapy is an effective treatment, either alone or in combination with medications.
- | People with mild or early symptoms of depression may be able to help themselves through changing their activity levels and disrupting patterns of unhelpful thinking (below).

## FIRST: GET UP AND GET GOING



Decades of research show that to defeat depression, it's essential to increase your activity levels - even if you don't feel motivated or energetic at first. Activities can include things that you would have previously found fun or enjoyable, or that would have given you a sense of accomplishment or achievement.

**Plan specific activities in advance.** This could be something like, "Tomorrow morning at 8AM, I will walk around the neighbourhood for 15 minutes," or "Wednesday, I will call my friend." Then when the time comes, do the planned activity regardless of how you feel about it at the moment.

**Start small.** Activities can be as simple as taking a shower and getting dressed, contacting a friend, or doing a load of laundry. As your mood and energy levels improve, you can progressively increase your activity level over time.

## FOLLOW YOUR PLAN. DON'T FOLLOW YOUR MOOD.

## NEXT: SAY "NO" TO NEGATIVITY



People with depression tend to dwell on negative thoughts about themselves, their lives, and their future. These thoughts can repeat over and over, like an endless loop of pessimism, self criticism, and bad news.

To challenge this way of thinking, ask yourself:

- | Am I holding myself - or someone else - to unrealistically high standards? Or assuming more responsibility for something than I/they actually have?
- | Am I seeing this situation/myself in all-or-nothing terms? Is there an in-between where things are/I am not perfect but also not a disaster?
- | Am I stuck in the past, dwelling on something that has already happened instead of focusing on what I can do right now?
- | What is a more positive way of thinking about this situation?
- | What would a friend tell me?

It might be difficult at first to identify less negative ways of thinking about yourself or situations. With practice - and in some cases help from others - it gets easier to do.



## GETTING HELP

Do not hesitate to get help, especially if your symptoms are severe and/or affecting your daily routines.

**Talk to your doctor or nurse practitioner.** They can assess your symptoms, clarify your diagnosis, and prescribe medication or other treatments to help you.

**Connect with a psychologist.** Like physicians and nurse practitioners, they can assess your symptoms and clarify your diagnosis, and in addition they can provide psychotherapy to treat your depression.

**Clinical counsellors with appropriate training are also able to provide psychotherapy for depression.**

## IF YOU HAVE SUICIDAL THOUGHTS, CONTACT 1-800-SUICIDE WITHOUT DELAY.

## DEPRESSION RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH TALL TREE

Tall Tree's exceptional team of mental health professionals can help with depression. If you aren't sure where to start, connect with our intake coordinator who will provide guidance, clarification, and a conversation about what might work best for you. You can contact our coordinator by phone at 250-978-0789 or email [mentalhealth@talltreehealth.ca](mailto:mentalhealth@talltreehealth.ca).