

Why do I feel like this?

We think that up to 1 in 4 young people become depressed at some stage. Sometimes this can be because something has happened in their lives that causes them to have psychological problems. This might be stress at home or at school, or a stressful event like a death of a close friend. Sometimes it starts when a family or relationship breaks up. Sometimes it involves a crisis like physical or sexual violence.

People vary in their response to these crises. What is stressful to one person may not be so to others. Some people seem to become easily depressed or stressed by difficult situations, while others don't. Sometimes this depends on the support they have around them. However, we know that depression is an illness that you can develop regardless of the events in your life or the support you have.

We think now that some people have a chemical imbalance in their brain that makes them feel sad, moody or anxious. This means that they may be unable to control their emotions, and they may become severely depressed at times for no reason. They can sometimes feel that the whole world is black, and there is no hope. When this illness is severe, they can even feel suicidal. Many people feel they are going mad. Depressed people are not mad, but they do have a problem that needs treating.



What can I do?

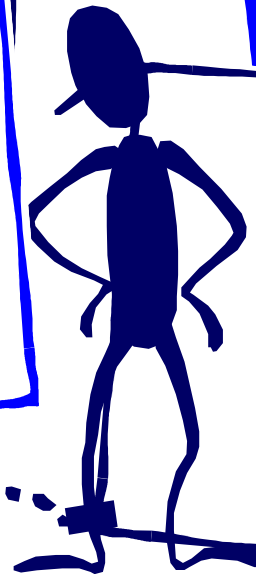
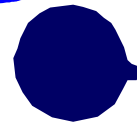
Accept that you have a problem: Depression can't be fixed by just snapping yourself out of it, or thinking positive, or by doing something you enjoy. The whole problem with the disease of depression is that the feelings aren't always what we would call reasonable. Some people look like they have great lives from the outside, but they can be very depressed anyway. If you are really depressed, you have a problem.

Talk to your GP: Many people think that doctors are only there to treat you if you are physically sick. In fact, we are there to help people with psychological problems too. Many of our patients have suffered from depression. Treatment is very effective, and often just involves talking through some issues.

Ask for help: Don't just hope these feelings will go away. It is very important that you seek help. You don't have to keep feeling this way.

Talk to an adult you trust: If you feel depressed, or a friend is depressed, it is very important that you talk to an adult about it. This can be a parent, teacher or friend, and it can certainly be a GP. We encourage you to involve an adult, because you will need support while you are dealing with the problem.

We encourage you to bring a support person with you when you see us. We know this isn't always possible, though, and if you really can't find someone to support you, we will always see you on your own.



Privacy

GPs respect your privacy. We will not discuss your problems with your parents or anyone else unless we have your permission. Our receptionists do not read our notes and will not know why you visited your GP. In some situations, the law requires us to release information about you. This is only done in extreme circumstances.

GPS RESPECT YOUR PRIVACY

We do not discuss your problem with anyone unless:

- You ask us to
- Someone is harming you
- You are at risk of harming yourself
- You are at risk of harming someone else

In most cases we would discuss this with you first.

Bookings

To see your GP you will need to make an appointment. It would be helpful if you have your Medicare card with you. A standard appointment is for ten to fifteen minutes. Ask for a longer appointment if this is the first time you have been to this medical centre, or if you feel you need it. After hours emergency appointments can be made by ringing the hospital.

Payment

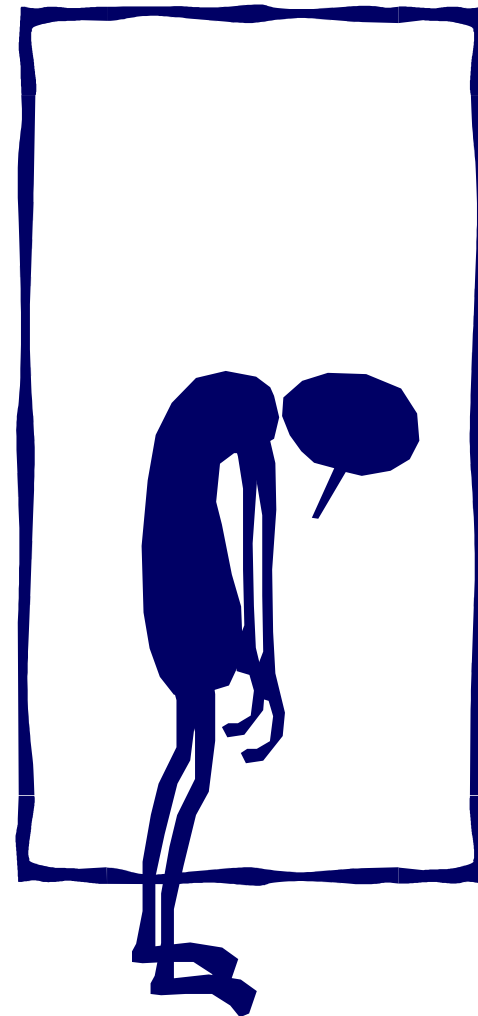
Different doctors and different practices have different approaches to billing. The Government pays for most of your consultation through Medicare. The rest is called the 'gap' - this varies between consultations. If you have a concession card, such as a health care or pension card, the cost of the consultation will be reduced. The receptionist will be able to tell you the practice charges. If you have problems paying for your treatment, you can discuss this with your doctor.



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Feeling down? Not coping?



See your GP